Experimental Phase in the Dramatic Career of Eugene O'Neill (1920–31)

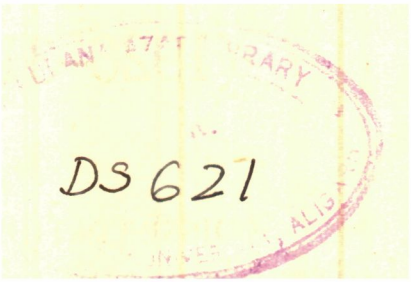
DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH

BY
SYEDA NUZHAT ZEBA

Under the Supervision of
Ms. ZAHIDA ZAIDI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH.

MAY 1981


DS 621


DS621

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is for me the most meaningful part of my thesis for hereby I get the opportunity to express my feelings of gratitudes to those who really made my work what it is(for its drawbacks of course, I am solely responsible).

My warm gratitude first goes to my Supervisor Ms. Zahida Zaidi, Reader, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Her able guidance her profound knowledge, especially in the field of modern drama, her enthusiasm and hearty encouragement are some of the things I have benefitted immensely from. Indeed, I should say, without Ms. Zaidi's guidance my dissertation would not have taken its present shape.

For the use of the library and other facilities at the Department I am deeply indebted to Prof. Asloob Ahmad Ansari, Head, Department of English.. Finally my thanks are due to my typist Mr. Ijlal Husain Faridi for his patience and efficiency in going through my manuscript.

Syeda Nuzhat Zeba.

SYEDA NUZHAT ZEBA

C O N T E N T S

C H A P T E R -I

INTRODUCTION:

Broadly speaking, from the year 1830 approximately to the period between the two World Wars, the phase is significant as regards the evolution of modern theatre and drama. In its period of emergence, modern drama was essentially in the nature of a revolt against conventially dramatic traditions. It not only called for a breakway from hackneyed styles but it also aimed at a messioanic and social revolt. To a messianic dramatist the universe is a projection of his own personality and he is determined to replace the old God and change the life of man. The social rebel on the other hand is not concerned with the relationship between man and God but with the conflict of the individual and community government, church and family.[1] The major exponents of modern drama, Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, Chekov, Pirandello, Brecht and O' Neill have partaken of this movement, each in his own way. The numerous styles of dramatic presentation, Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Surrealism and Expressionism have been manifestations of this movement.

The most important step taken in this connection in the development of drama towards modernity, was the rejection of melodrama. A widespread discontent with the existing form and a desire for realism was felt among the theatre going audience. In France, Eugene Scribe introduced the Well Made Play where themes

1. Brustein Robert, " The Theatre of Revolt, Methuen & Co., 1968. Chapter 1.

from everyday life were presented within a set and regular pattern consisting of mechanically contrived situations, planned intrigues and stock situations. Such a play was a mere contrivance, without organic life. The themes most often would be sentimental romances, drawing room comedies, historical episodes, and for a period of every thirty years Scribe and his diligent disciples, Sardou, Augier and Alexandre Dumasfils inundated the theatres of Europe with productions of this kind. Though a kind of surface realism, this was the first step towards realism. The theatre too was developed by now and the stage had acquired sophisticated equipments as a result of the coming of electricity which allowed for greater flexibility of control.

In contrast to the French playwrights were the Russians, who favoured a realistic depiction of life and society on all levels, concentrating on the most individual and therefore the least universal aspects of a social milieu. While Tolstoy and Turgenev wrote realistic plays flavoured with idealism and a certain element of theppoetic, in the works of Ostrovsky we find a powerful satire on the existing conditions of life. Ostrovsky's works in certain respects anticipate the naturalistic drama of Hebbel and Zola.

Realism as a style and form of drama was also advocated by Hermann Hettner in his Das Modern Drama 1850. Hettner claimed that the German writer Hebbel was the pioneer of a " a great dramatic revival"[1] and that " in the struggles within the social fabric lay

---

1. Nicoll, Allardyce, World Drama, London, George G. Harrapp and Co., 1964, p. 521.

the material for a new form of tragedy."[1] He called upon all playwrights of the age to strive at once to concentrate on psychological truth and a deep understanding of social forces."[2] The work bore in it the seeds of the drama of ideas propounded by Ibsen and Shaw.

However Realism as expounded by Ibsen and Shaw was still a step away when a group of writers, led by Hebbel in Germany and Emile Zola in France came on the scene. These playwrights called themselves "naturalists". Naturalism demanded a faithful and acute presentation of life. As Hottner pointed out in his book, this dramatic movement rose in response to the stimuli of the age which was one of bewildering contradictions, between science and religious dogmas, naturalism and idealism, possimism and optimism. Its essential characterstics were that it was rational and scientific and took a negative attitude towards aestheticism and romanticism. While Scribe and Sardou depicted life in all its gaiety and smugness, the naturalists were determined to show that life was not all sunshine and laughter, there was another side to it. Hebbells works especially Maria Magdalena have all the ingredients of such a form. " The drab middle class atmosphere, the sensationalism, the tendency towards moralization, the conflict of man and society." [3] The attitude of Hebbel is very bold and blatant, but brilliant though he is in his ideas, he fails to reach across to the audience because of a lack of effective expressiveness. It was Emile Zola who with his Therese

---

1. Ibid p. 521
2. Ibid p. 521
3. Ibid p. 508

Raquin 1873 set the style to perfection. Zola is an artist greatly committed to the social cause. His writing therefore has sharpness and penetration which could only have come from a highly committed writer. Zola paints the picture of the lower middle class society with a detached and complete scientific objectivity. Distortion or misrepresentation of any kind is avoided and photographic literalness aimed at. Zola desired drama to be true existence, While with Scribe and Sardou the play was an argument and the plot so contrived as to bring that argument to a preconceived conclusion. ~~With~~ Zola's world therefore is one of starkness, poverty and squalor and full of characters whoappear to be psychological case studies. Zola adopted an anti romantic attitude towards the theatre but that in no way indicated his desire to revive the classic theatre.

Naturalism was tied to the apron-strings of realism which reached culmination in the works of Ibsen. As the exponent and master of realistic drama, the significance of Henrik Ibsen is indisputable. Quite rightly too, for the Norwegian maestro displays a profound understanding of the social, moral, ehtical problems of his times, a more penetrating vision of life on the whole, and a far stronger grip of the theatrical techniques than any of his predecessors had done. His revolt is messianic in the early phase of his dramatic career, where he celebrates the importance of man in nature. In this period he produces extravagent epics in the romantic strain like Brand, Poor Gynt and Emperor and Galilean. Beneath them all, however is the same sharp and penetrating vision of life and powerful

depiction of character which is a hall-mark of his later plays. With Ghosts and The Doll's House, one enters the culminating period of realistic drama in a big way. The rebel against God has turned into a rebel against society. Ghosts is a play of intense psychological insight and down to earth realism. Ibsen's ruthless exposure of the workings of heredity in its most unpleasantly clinical form/congenital syphilis created a sesation in Europe. It hit the mark because it was a burning question of the day. The Doll's House is an attack on marriage based on lie and an assertion of a young girl married to a man who posses tobe devoted husband. When her eyes open to this fraudulent ways, she decides to leave him. The play is not so much about Women's Lib as about the freedom of the individual as a whole. The Ibsen's realism was at a very complex point in The Dollâs House when he gave way to the symbolic. The Wild Duck shows a gradual deepening of theme and content and the dramatist's expression of the psychological and tragic realism in a more effective way. Men and women are depicted as " frail and pitiable figures"[1] who need an emotional clutch and illusion to survive.by. Outwardly realistic Rosmersholm has a symbolic structure. The delineation of the modern emancipated woman is subtle and the play is a haunting tragedy of the/conflict between old conscience and new spirit. Ibsen's grasp and delineation of the complexities of the subconscious was gaining strength. In Hedda Gabbler he presents the problem of the maladjusted woman. Devoid of any symbols the play is a straightforward and direct revelation .

1. Ibid p. 538.

of human character as it unfolds itself in various situations. By the time Ibsen wrote The Master Builder, yet another symbolic drama, dramatizing aspiration or the exertion of the will in defiance of inhibiting circumstances, he was a master craftsman in his own right. His greatness lies especially in his adaptation of the French Well Made Play by casting asides the older methods of exposition and soliloquies, and enriching the forms with his social and psychological vision. Thus what was mechanical before, he made organic. His terseness of form combined with an economy of means, the abolishing of the ancient five act division, and the sharpness of his carefully worded stage directions, all these factors make him a model for the younger generation. Ibsen's forte is his art of characterization, where he depicts middle class characters, but with a difference, His characters are always removed from the ordinary, they are human beings driven by one single passion--- Nora, Rebecca, Hedda, Solness--- each one of them is an individual obsessed with a sole aim.

Though George Bernard Shaw comes much later, the inspiration behind his writing is Ibsen of whom he was an ardent fan. His works of the earliest phase of his dramatic career are very much influenced by Ibsen in their treatment of theme and style. But Shaw's significance lies in the fact that he broadened the horizon of comedy whereas Ibsen was the pioneer of social tragedy. Even when Shaw deals with a serious subject his treatment of it is consistently and brilliantly comic. Possessed of a brilliant sense of wit and humour and refined hedonism, Shaw can always make

a bitter truth drive home without displeasing his readers. A social rebel, desirous of change in social and moral areas, Shaw makes drama an instrument of reform. Little doubt that he has, of all modern writers, thought more vigorously, more clearly and with a more penetrating insight into the problems of modern times. From Mrs. Warren's Profession where the institution of prostitution is attacked to Back to Methuselah where he evolves his theory of Life Force to Man and Superman which declares the perfectability of man Shaw has "consistently infused into his action, ideas of a philosophical and sociological kind and the stage has given him the opportunity of shattering numerous false, idols and awakening our minds to thoughts beyond the shallowly conventional!" [1] Shaw is a juggler of ideas and in this his Irish gift of speech has played a significant role. We cannot regard him as a philosopher, for he expounds no consistent philosophy, yet his arguments on any subject that he takes up are highly logical, rational, aiming at positive results. He has never been an iconoclast for the mere pleasure of being one.

One of the greatest achievements of Shaw was the refining of all dramatic forms. He would use a particular style or convention to undermine and debunk the very same. The element of 'surprise' and 'contradiction' are part of the joy of Shaw's works. Often, his plays get stuck at a point of garrulity and static dramaturgy but in the main his playfulness is a mark of his creativeness, especially in his reformistic plays. In Shaw we witness a gradual deepening of theme and content. He starts with realism, but goes

---

1. Ibid, p. 745

on to experiment with various modes—— melodrama, opera and extravaganza. " The structure is familiar" but the presentation is not, where character"s brilliant of tongue and daring in their expression of idea"[1] appear, and his carefully worded and pointed stage directions and chaste prose give to the old devices a touch of novelty.

Though Strindberg is Ibsen's contemporary, yet his approach to drama is far different from each other. Because of his restless experimental nature and his initiation of the antirealistic theatre. In opposition to Ibsenist realism, Strindberg has been regarded as his antimask. While there is control, balance and a certain objectivity of vision in Ibsen, there is an intensity and subjectivity of approach in Strindberg, which naturally determines the changing directions of their themes and forms.

Strindberg's approach to drama is highly subjective. Romantic in the early phase, his style becomes naturalistic later and he then wrote plays like The Creditors, Father, Miss Julie where he started a " trenchant series of darkly pessimistic and torturedly realistic dramas"[2] From the very beginning Strindberg has a fascination for the subconscious, a desire to delve deep into the inner most recesses of the human psyche. After the production of Miss Julie, Strindberg underwent a spiritual crisis, after which he wrote The Road to Damascus, The Dream Play and Ghost Sonata. Strindberg's artistic, sexual and religious conversion deeply affected his conception of theme, subject matter, character and form.

1. Ibid, p. 751
2. Ibid, p. 553

His major achievement was the "dream play technique" which manifests itself in the three plays mentioned above. Gone is the compact form and the psychological detail of Miss Julie. In their place comes a flowing, formless, fluid series of episodes, in which Strindberg imaginatively uses light, music, visual symbols and atmospheric effects to cut through the materiality of the life to the spiritual truths beneath. These plays are alike in their use of free form, so close to the form of a dream; space is relative chronological times is broken and characters possess allegorical names like the Stranger, the Student the Poet, the Dreamer. Strindberg was interested in the intensely subjective and so he evolved a form which could incorporate such a presentation. He discarded realism and the narrative style of dramatic sequences for a new and more sophisticated technique---- that of the stream-of-consciousness device by which life on stage was depicted as intensely subjective internalised and as disjointed and blurred as in a dream. Strindberg's innovation stimulated a number of dramatic movements prominent among which were expressionism and surrealism.

Two dramatists who may not be stalwarts in modern drama, but have contributed to it in a considerable way are Hauptmann and Wedekind. Possessed of a romantic disposition, he wrote plays in the naturalistic style of Zola. His best work is The Weavers, 1892, a classic drama of strike, hunger and rebellion. Hauptmann has not the objectivity of vision that is Zola's but he is able to bring out the impact of social changes on man in all its density and immediacy, with all its complex motivations and implications. Almost at the same time Wedekind caused a furore in the theatrical world with his

expressionistic writing. To extol the powers of sex and to attack a hypocritical stultifying society, these were his main aims. He seems to derive much from Nietzschean philosophy and Strindberg. Realism in his plays seems to be bursting its seams. Like Strindberg he moves from naturalism of the starkest kind to symbolic abstractions and then into the haunted realm of the nightmare. Wedekind was regarded as the pioneer of the school of German expressionists which comprised of playwrights like Kaiser, Toller and Capek.

With Chekov we come to period of the sublimation of realism, from the down to earth to the poetic. In his lyricism, subtlety and objectivity of vision, Chekov has no rival. Deeply committed to the social cause, he uses drama to envision his commitment. Like Ibsen, Shaw and Strindberg he is also a social rebel but his revolt is by indirection--muted, objectified, dispassionate. Chekov uses drama neither as a means of achieving individual self realization as in Ibsen, nor exorcistic self expression as in Strindberg, but rather as a form for depicting the fluid world beyong the self with the author functioning only as an impartial witness.[1]

---

1. Brustein, Op.cit., p.21.

Chekov's plays can be divided into two groups: the "direct action" plays like Platonov, Ivanov and The Dream Wood and "indirect action" plays, namely, The Sea Gull, Uncle Vania, The Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard, the latter for being his most mature works and formally experimental in nature. In all these plays Chekov presents a group in decline. In The Sea Gull he presents such a group and yet he gives a true individuality to each character by making him belong and relate to a particular environment--- provincial Russia. This helped Chekov add both dimension and purpose to this dramas.

To this however, Chekov adds another principles for although his characters are submerged they are not at all passive. They dream, they rebel, they reach out for what they want. Treplev wants to create a new imaginative art, Nina pursues her secret dream of a rich life by following a successful novelist and sacrificing her security. Characters like these are attractive because of their aliveness and life is justified and exalted by them. Chekov in this way aligns himself with the masters of tragedy who can transform defeat into spiritual triumph.

Another striking quality about Chekov's plays is that it is a drama of static action but inner lyrical movement. One of the greatest technical achievements of Chekov was to achieve a synthesis between theatricality and reality, guiding events which seem to have no visible means of propulsion and developing a form which seems to be no form at all. Deeper action remains in

the background but the attention is always fixed on them.

In his plays Chekov has achieved a poetry of emotions and environment which the greatest of realists and naturalists failed to instil in their works. Chekov creates it by means of a mood that consists of alternate shadings of hope and despair, tears and laughter. He employs symbolism in his plays, but it is not very explicit. Chekov may introduce some suggestive detail which somehow epitomizes the pattern or meaning of the play. In The Sea Gull the tragedy of young people cut off in their prime is represented by the sea gull which Treplev shot down without rhyme or reason. In Three Sisters their weak desire to transcend the limitation of their environment, the storm in Uncle Vania the orchard in the Cherry Orchard are all symbols with several directions of meaning.

While Chekov brought in the poetic qulity in the theatre, by making symbolic use of realistic drama, the Irish dramatist also contributed to the poetic tradition by making a significant use of linguistic resourcess and bringing poetry to the theatre. Synge, Yeats and J.M. Barrie all make use of Irish folklore in their plays to bring in a poetical and mythological quality. Synge deserves special mention because he was able to extend the confines of the realistic by mastering a prose style which had in it the rich cadences of poetry, while at the same time sustaining ties with common speech.

And thus we come to the end of the ninteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Till the turn of the century Ibsen had loomed large on the scene. Then came Shaw and Chekov with their

own brand of realism. Though no neat breakaway can be witnessed between the 19th and 20th century an influx of experimentation is visible in the new era as Ibsen fades into the background. Twentieth century theatre marks a clear breakaway from ties of romanticism and photographic literalness and aims at a poetic and symbolic one. A number of varied forces were at play behind this change and some of the significant changes were in the art of the theatre itself.

In 1897 Constantin Stanislavsky, a great Russian artist, actor, scenic designer and theoretician on the art of acting, played a pivotal role in bringing about the opening of the Moscow Art Theatre. Stage realism dedicated in its first phase to photographic literalness gradually matured and mellowed into psychological and imaginative realism. Stanislavsky helped deepen the concept of realism on stage. His theory on the art of acting is essentially an appeal to dramatic actors to identify with the role. Acting must follow the law of inner justification and the actor must create his role as if it were one with his personality. In no sense must the director impose his preconceived idea on the actor. He must evoke it instead out of the actor's inner self. Stanislavsky wanted a realistic theatre which would go beyond the scrupulous attempt to photograph externals. Rightly this theatre was called the theatre of inner feeling. Stanislavsky's stress upon psychological realism on stage and his theory of acting made him an excellent executor of Chekov's plays.

At the peak of realism in theatre these arose in reaction to it a movement which was a reflection of the symbolic trend in poetry. It differed in theory and practice from the realistic theatre

in stressing suggestiveness, poetry of mood and various degrees of symbolism, the directors and scenic designers took their cue mainly from Wagner's ideas on theatre as a perfect synthesis of the arts.

In 1899 Adolphe Appia published his The Music and the Art of the Theatre wherein he established a hierarchy of ideas to achieve his aims. A passionate Wagnerite, Appia was moving towards symbolism and he bases his approach to the theatre on music---- music which is "the law giver", the ultimate source of synthesis in the arts. The elements of scenic designs were to be the scenery, the floor, the moving actor and the lighted space. The theatre that gives life to a dramatist's script was to be a perfect synthesis or a single effect . The unifying element was to be light, which was to mould and bind the scene and actors thereby creating a unified mood and conveying the essence of dramatic production. Light with its infinite capacity for varying nuance was the counterpart of the musical score to Appia. Appia underminod the value of painting as a descriptive element, but emphasized the value of colour in light for their visual appeal and symbolic significance.

The year after Appia published his treatise, Gordon Craig came on the scene. Unlike Appia whose emphasis is purely emotional, Craig's is primarily visual and theatrical. He was an advocate of the anti-realistic theatre. Craig assaulted the false realism of the traditional paintings and emphasized the simplified plastic designs and use of screens curtains and abstruct lighting. His book The Mask which he edited for the advancement of the modern theatre took the theatrical world by storm. His ideas were

provocative and his drawings beautiful, even if his own efforts to apply them misfired.

Together Appia and Craig were able to guide the modern theatre away from the clutches of naturalism and romanticism and they succeeded in establishing a non commercial theatre. A number of such theatres had already sprung up in various parts of the country and they provided the bright and keen young artists an opportunity to display their talent. A number of the well known dramatists of our times owe their break to such theatres---Chekov to the Moscow Art Theatre, Shaw to the Independent Stage Society, Synge to Dublin Abbey, and O'Neill to The Provincetown Players.

The early decades of the 20th century saw the rise of a number of theatrical and dramatic movements. Of the minor trends, futurism and dadaism were notworthy but they died a premature death. The two gigantic movements were Expressionism and Surrealism which took America and Europe under its sway. The beginning of the First World War had somewhat hampered theatrical activities, but it had also given the writers a new awareness of the social and economic conditions. With the end of the War there was a marked revival of theatrical activities.

Expressionism which had been foreshadowed in the works of Strindberg and Wedekind gained impetus in the 20th century It emerged in Europe "from an intellectual climate consisting of diverse features amongst which "Nietzsche's vitalism, Marinetti's futurism, Whitman's pantherism and Dostoevesky's psychological probing into subrational darkness played an important part"[1]. The

1. Expressionism: R.S. Furness, The Critical Idiom, ed. by J.D. Jump, Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1973, p. 2. Ibid p, 21.

whole tendency was towards abstraction, towards autonomous colour and metaphor, away from plausibility and imitation, a fervent desire to express and create regardless of formless canons, and a concern for the typical and essential rather than the purely personal and individual; a predilection for esctasy and despair and hence a tendency towards the inflated and grotesque and ... an urgent sense of the here and how".[1]

In the expressionistic plays" short scenes took the place of longer acts; dialogue was made abrupt and given a staccato effect; symbolic forms were substituted for "real" characters; realistic scenery was abandoned and in its place the use of light was fully substituted; frequently choral or mass effects were preferred to the employment of single figures or else single figures were elevated into positions where they became representative of forces larger than themselves".[2]

These means being new had a peculiar fascination for the minds of the 20th century and playwrights like Kaiser, Toller and Capek took up the technique to project contemporary, social and economic issues. The expressionists were" in conscious revolt against the whole impressionistic theatre of inwardness. Rejecting the presentation of the individual they sought to represent man in the mass and crowed emotions. Thus in keeping with the concept of expressionism as of"action as symbol peopled by abstractions and presented in closely shifting elusive scenes",[3] the expressionist

1. Ibid p. 21
2. Nicoll Op.cit., p.795
3. Broussard, Louis, American Drama: Contemporary Allegory from O' Neill to T. Williams, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1962 p.

represent the protagonist not as an individual but as an abstraction, a symbol of Man, Society, Life. In Toller's Man and the Masses we see the failure of the revolutions to solve the problem of the masses. In Kaiser's Morn till Midnight the world looks commensurate unreal to the cashier because of the extravagant and fugitive scenes. The theme may also be the impact of the industrial and military developments as in Kaiser's Gas Trilogy or the danger of man's submission the machines as in Capek's RUR. Kaiser added to the expressionistic technique his famous telegram style where the characters speak in short clipped sentences and sometimes only in monosyllables. Expressionism found adherents in countries other than Europe. In America, J.H. Lawson wrote The Processional and Elmer Rice, the much famous The Adding Machine. Expressionism and realism meet in the works of Sean O'Casey especially in The Silver Tassie where he begins with realism but later switches over to expressionism in the symbolic treatment of the trenches.

The development of the subjective theatre was another prominent feature of the 20th century. It was influenced by the Impressionist School and in many ways foreshadowed the absurd drama of Beckett and Ionesco. In 1899 Alfred Jarry had written an essay-- Ubu Roi, a treatise on the surrealistic style. In 1917 Guillaume Appollionnairre presented The Breasts of Tiresias and in 1925 Andre Breton published his first surrealistic manifesto. Surrealism was an assertion of the belief that the world of the poncious mind has a reality superior to that of the phenomenal world. The seeds of this movement were sown by Strindberg's works but the theory owes much to the research of Freud also, whose technique of probing

the unconscious mind for the ultimate truth of human behaviour compares with the surrealistic mood of penetrating the depths of human personality to tap the inexhaustible sources of the imagination. The most eminent exponent of Surrealism on stage was Antonin Artaud who was also a poet, a professional actor and director, and his companion Roger Vitrac. Artaud directed many of Vitrac's plays. But his real importance lies in the theoritical writings and his practical equipments as a producer.

Artaud reaches the conclusion that the confusion of his time springs from the "rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas that are their representation."[1] He also rejects the psychological and narrative theatre with its "preoccupation with personal problems",[2] and passionately calls for a return to myth and magic, for a ruthless exposure of the conflicts of the human mind, for a theatre of cruelty. "Every thing that acts is a cruelty. It is upon this idea of extreme action pushed beyond all its limits that the theatre must be rebuilt."[3] Artaud thought that "by confronting the audience with the true image of their internal conflicts, a poetic magical theatre would bring liberation and release. Calling for a total rejection of realism, Artaud desired a plastic and physical stage and a language of the theatre which would be a wordless language of shapes, light movement and gesture. To him the aim was to express on stage what the language failed to do in words. Theoretically Artaud along with Jarry and Appollionnairre was the father of Absurd Drama.

1. Antonin Artaud,"The Theatre and its Double," trans. Mary C. Richards, New York, Grove Press, 1958, p. 7
2. Ibid p. 42
3. Ibid p. 85
4. Esslin, Martin; The Theatre of the Absurd, Penguin Books, New York, 1961, p. 373.

Another playwright who proved to be an iconoclast in the modern theatre and drama was Luigi Pirandello. With this Italian playwright we enter modern experimental drama in a big way. Pirandello is not only departing from realism in modern drama but questioning the very nature of reality itself. For instance, to a dramatist like Ibsen, a character may be complex but the chracter is always on despite its complexity. With Pirandello it is different. He believes in the dissolution of the ego, the ambiguity of the basic self. From this he developed his theory of the mask and face. Pirandello's translation of these ambiguities in an adequate and challenging way is his crucial achievement. From this concept of the mask and face he goes on to discuss the relationship between art and nature, life and form. If any thing is permanent, it is the reality of a work of art. Art is arrested movement and therefore permanent, Life is in a constant state of flux and therefore impermanent. These ideas absurd the plays of Pirandello and Six Characters in Search of an Author is an epitome of his eternal controversies between art and life, illusion and reality. Probing the complex relationship between the stage, the work of art and reality itself, Pirandello tries to forge out of the old theatrical artifacts a new living theatre, destroying the traditional conventions of the stage by crossing the boundaries which separate art from life.

The Twentieth Century also saw the emergence of the American theatre. So far there had been no dramatic literature of importance written across the Pacific. The country was well advanced in the field of poetry and fiction but drama sadly lagged behind.

There was evident among the American dramatists from 1890 to 1914, a great love for surface realism. They were still the disciples of Scribe and the Well Made Play. Scores of melodramas and farce written within this period exhibit considerable technical potentialities within the limits of the particular form. Gradually this was deepened by presenting on stage dramas on contemporary life, for instance Bronson Heward's Shenandoah 1888, or J.H. Hume's Shore Acres. As the 20th centurymmoved past its first decade on remarkable change set in. David Belasco's plays had laid the foundation for the modern American theatre. Now certain groups of writers were formed, sponsored by literary minded persons, prominent among whom were the Washington Square Players and the Provincetown Players. They gave break to people like Theresa Helburn, Robert Edmund Jones, Phillipp Moeller, Lawrence Langner and Lee Simonson. All these writers advanced from a tiny makeshift village in Greenwich to become the Theatre Guild. It was the Provincetown Players which gave opportunity and stimulation to a writer who became the pioneer of modern American Theatre and Drama. His Name was Eugene O' Neill.

Few dould dispute the fact that Eugene O' Neill was the pioneer of modern drama in America. As Gassner rightly observes---" He reflected also all that until recently was modern about the European theatre in his restless experientation, his avid cultivation of new ideas, his assertive individualism and his intense ease".[1] OS Neill elevated the art of playwrighting from the

1. " The Nature of O' Neill is Achievement: A Summary and Appraisal" -- in O' Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays ed. J. Gassner, Twentieth Century Views Series, p. 166

commercial to the level of creative art. Before him, American drama was in a state of stagnation, producing plays of either the naturalistic or the melodramatic kind. He was the first American dramatist who also emerged on the international scene. O' Neill was an ambitious writer, one who had some great projects before him to work out." A leader of the experimental Little Theatre Movement, led by his own play producing organisation, the Provincetown Players, and after 1920 the leading playwright also of the progressive wing of Broadway professionalism, O' Neill sparked a revolt of great movement against middle class complacency and common place realism on the American stage." [1]

O' Neill has been rate as one of the most restless experimenters in dramatic form. It was no doubt his desire to express life in the most adequate and expressive terms which led him to experiment so effusively. O' Neill was particularly qualified for the kind of experimentation he went through due both to his familiarity with contemporary intellectual thought and development in the field of theatre and drama. A brief survey of the biographical literary, philosophical and theatrical sources of O' Neill's experimental career becomes imperative in order to attempt a correct appraisal of the dramatist.

His early life, biographers agree, was the most formative in making O' Neill the kind of man and artist he grew up tob be. Since the time he was born in a hotel room in Broadway in 1888, he never had a permanent home. His unhappy childhood and schooling

---

1. Ibid p: 166.

years at Mt. Saint Vincent and Betts Academy, the tragedies in his family— the morphine addiction of his mother and the alcoholic self destruction of his brother, His two wrecked marriages, and his eventual loss of faith— all these factors left him with a deep sense of rootlessness and a haunting sense of insecurity and spiritual dissatisfaction.

His father, James O' Neill a renowned actor of Monte Cristo fame, early introduced him to the world of theatre and drama. The intellectual curiosity of O' Neill urged him to acquaint himself with the current thoughts and literature. The greatest influence on him was of Nietzsche and his works, particularly Thus Spake Zarathustra and The Birth of Tragedy. The former insists on the irrational and limit breaking in the character of Zarathustra who stresses the will to power. The latter also stresses the irrational in the form of the Dionysian principle. The main conception of thes work is the distinction between the Appollonian and the Dionysian as the two forces operating in Greek Tragedy before Euripides. The former stress on illusion and individuation— that which gave shape and form to art. The latter is the primeval creative force behind all great art, the vital pagan acceptance of life which abolishes the separation between man and nature by means of ecstatic celeberation. The effect of Dionysian is apparent in The Great God Brown and Lazarus Laughed.

The irrational also plays an important role in the theories of Freud and Jung and O' Neill was familiar with the ideas of both though he admitted the influence of Jung only. Despite his reluctanc to admit it, the Freudian impact is clearly apparent. It is necessar

to stress Freud's regard for the power of the unconcious and his interest in dreams as an indication psychic reality. Jung is more relevant in the understanding of O' Neill and the dramatist put several of his ideas into practice. The regression of the Emperor Jones into the personal and racial and collective unconscious and his encounters therein are undeniably Jungian. In fact one may even suggest that the seven different types of mask worn in Lazarus Laughed reflect the teachings of Jung's "Psychological types" with which O' Neill may have been familiar.

O' Neill also displays a wide reading in drama and literature. He tries to identity with that long line of rebel dramatists, incorporating their styles and techniques. One can easily trace the influence of Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, Toller, Georg Wedekind, and Synge and perhaps also Pirandello in his work. Towering above all however is the figure of Strindberg, whom O' Neill acknowledges as his master and the most modern of all the playwrights.

O' Neill's admiration for and affinity with Strindberg lies in a number of cause. Their lives as well as dramatic careers move along parallel lines. The two are alike, not only their experimental pursuits but in their entir approach to drama. They are both subjective and intense dramatists. There is the same spirituality, the same psychol gical penetration into character and preoccupation with subconscious derives and much the same obsession with ideas

Both express in their plays, states of extreme alienation via fantastic settings, starting sound effects and abnormal masked characters. Strindberg's unique brand of psychological expressionism with its emphasis on inner tensions and divisions can clearly claim as progeny the divided heroes of O' Neill.

Yet another significant influence on O' Neill in his formative years was his familiarity with Greek tragedy. This coloured and dominated his vision of life which is by and large tragic. Like the Greeks, O' Neill believed in the concept of Fate and the role that it played in the life of man. According to this conception, man's life in this world is one of constant eternal struggle against heavy odds, reducing man to the level of mere play thing in the hands of the conmic powers. However while the Greeks try to understand the human predicament with reference to supernatural machinery, O.Neill related it to the complex motivations and destructive forces of the human psyche. He attempted to analyse and understand the tragic predicament of man with reference to latest developments in depth psychology. His tragic vision is related to modern philosophical thought too; an expression of life where man finds himself placed in an incoherent, disturbing world where there is a total absence of a moralsystem, and religious beliefs. It is an absurd universe where man finds himself contending with incomprehensible forces. In comparision with the ancient tragedians O'Neill's concept of life often borders on pessimism. Among various personal and biographical reasons, one significant reason may be his loss of faith in his days of youth after which O'Neill's feelings of alienation and belonginglessness were intensified. O'Neill was in

a way compelled to believe that although a human being strives for meaning and value in existence, his endeavours are always thwarted. His long and tortursus quest almost always ends in a tragic impasse.

All of O' Neill plays are born of this continuous soul searching, his spiritual quest. Each play is a renewed attempt to come to grips with the same problem" to dig at the roots of the sickness of today as I feel it-- the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfactory new one for the surviving primitive religious instinct".[1] The search led him to experiment with numerous styles but behind the apparent diversity was one impulse to find an idion to express the human tragedy effectively. From the early One Act Plays to the expressionistic plays to Mourning Becomes Electra, The Iceman Cometh and Long Day's Journey into Night the drive has been the same.

O' Neill's experimentation with style and dialogue, betrays several indications of his indebtedness to Wedekind. Both mix poetic rhythm with mundane discourse resulting in warring qualities which make for distortion of realistic speech. Kaiser's influence is there too-- his famous telegram style in which characters speak in short dipped sentences. Another two artists of impressionable influence on O'Neill were Robert Edmund Jones and Kenneth Macgowan, both of whom enlightened and encouraged O' Neill in his dramatic ventures. R.E. Jones, a disciple and admirer of Craig was

1. Cited in B. H. Clark, Eugene O'Neill, The Man and His Plays New York, Dover Publications, 1947, p. 120.

THE brilliant set designer for most of O' Neill's plays. Jones influence as regards characterization and the use of mobs, masks and marionnette effect is of considerable importance Even the set designs and stagecrafts by Jones helped freeO O'Neill from the constraints of the realistic theatre. He encouraged O'Neill to experiment with setting,lighting, constume and stage properties and hence O' Neill not surprisingly continued the revolt against realism which Craig and Reindhart had led. Macgowan's Theatre of Tomorrow 1921, and Continental Stagecraft 1922 demonstrated his anti-realistic stand towards theatre and drama by which O' Neill was influenced. Macgowan may also have been specifically responsible for O' Neill's innovative use of thought asides condensed dialogues and soliloquies.

Though O' Neill started his dramatic career by writing One Act plays, he was soon dissatisfied with the form. With the Emperor Jones 1920 he launched his experimental period of writing where O' Neill experiments with style after style. technique after technique. Often it becomes a severe oscillation between one extreme and the other- from expressionistic to realistic to psychological and emotional. It is not exactly an artistic development but neverthless it is a significant period in O' Neill's dramatic career. An attempt has been made in this dissertation tochalk out this period and assess its importance. The focus is exclusively on the period between 1920-31, because of the rare quality of experiment ation that it provides. Each of the seven plays is notable for some experimental quality in theme or style. While The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape employ expressionistic devices, Desire Under the

Elms is a drama of passion, lust and possession where the c combination of symbolism and psychological realism is particularly significant. From Desire Under the Elms we go on to The Great God Brown which created a sensation in American theatre because of its powerful depiction of a split personality by the use of masks. Lazarus Laughed again is a play which celebrates the Nietzschean philosophy of eternal recurrence and O' Neill makes use of several experimental devices including masks and mob effects. Strange Interlude takes us back to the Elizabethan technique of asides but O! Neill has modified the technique and brought it closer to the Stream-of-Consciousness device, where the actors seem tobe acting on two levels-- the outer or temporal . and the inner or psyshologica Mourning Becomes Electra is a befitting end to his experimentations. Here is a recasting and a re-interpretation of the Greek myth from the psychological point of view in the perspective of recent American historical intellectual and moral traditions.

In the subsequent chapters an attempt has been made to analyse the importance and significant of the various plays under consideration in the light of their respective experimental style or technique.

.....

THE IMAGE OF MAN IN " THE EMPEROR JONES" (1920) AND " THE HAIRY APE" (1921) - THE EXPRESSIONISTIC PHASE.

Unlike most dramatists who adhere to one method of presentation which they gradually master and refine, Eugene O' Neill restlessly tried new forms and techniques. His incessant experimentation was, like Strindberg, Chiefly a result of a deep concern with what he termed the "behind life"--- the metaphysical and psychological mysteries of life. To find an adquate way of expressing the most inexpressible was his task as a dramatist. In the earlier phase of his experimentation, O' Neill had used the play's structural pattern as a contribution toiits total statement."[1] But though the philosophy of his dramatic compositions remained the same in his later plays, the form of each particular drama was in keeping with the nature of his theme. O' Neill resorted to expressionism when he was possessed by the desire to expose the "psychic wounds" of the twentieth century life and society, and to project an image of man and human situation in the present day modern world.

O' Neill frankly admitted that Strindberg was the most modern of all the dramatists as regards his views on theatre and drama. He acknowledged Strindberg to be the master of expressionism.

---

1. Goyal, B.S., " The Strategy of Survival" Vimal Prakashan, Ghaziabad, 1975, p. 73.

Strindberg's Preface to The Dream Play 1902 gave O' Neill the idea of what expressionism could mean. The older dramatist had written that in it----

" Anything can happen; everything is possible and probable; Time and Space do not exist; on a slight groundwork of reality, imagination designs and embroiders novel patterns; a medley of memories, experiences, free fancies, absurdities and improvisations".

Further he wrote that in such a play the characters " Split, double and multiply; they evaporate, crystallize, scatter and converge." [1]

Strindberg's concept of expressionism often overruns the borders of surrealism, as this quotation makes evident. O' Neill's concept of expressionism is different from Strindberg's, more so from that of the German expressionists---Kaiser, Toller and Capek who denied the value of characterization. A committed artist that was , O' Neill could not overlook the importance of characterization in drama. Reducing characters to mere abstractions would be fatal to the popularity of the theatre in America. He spoke of his idea of expressionism in The New York Herald Tribune---

" I personally do not believe that an idea can be readily put over to an audience except through characters. When it sees a "Man" and "Woman" just abstractions, it loses the human contact by which it identifies itself with the protagonist of the play. An example of this sort of expressionism is Morn Till Midnight.... This is the point at which I disagree with the theory. I do not believe that the character gets between the author's idea and the

---

1. Strindberg's Preface to The Dream Play, 1902, Cited in "World Drama" A. Nicoll, George Harrapp & Co., London, 1949, p. 562.

audience. The real contribution of the expressionist has been in the dynamic qualities of his play. They express something in modern life better than did the old plays".[1]

The passage is self-evident as regards O' Neill's view and understanding of expressionism, O' Neill did not believe in distortion for distortion's sake, nor did he think much about abstract characterization. Strindberg was more to his liking. Incorporating the idea of the maestro in his works, O' Neill made expressionism the new tool for his experimentations, since his main aim had always been to discuss the problems of the modern human psyche, this new device afforded him tremendous opportunities to do so. Now he could make use of "effective tools of communication like the use of rythm and musical sounds through the patterning of dialogues and repetition of phrases the use of monologues and asides, pantomimes and telegram style, the use of short and effective scenes, of sound effects and the depiction of the living characters as symbol of humanity".

Though the use of expressionistic devices are to a degree recurring in many of O' Neill's plays, the two most highly experimental of them all are The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape. Apart from them, All God's Chillum Got Wings, The Great God Brown and Lazarus Laughed have certain expressionistic elements but they are combined and enriched by other dramatic and experimental devices in these plays.

---

1. New York Herald Tribune, March 16, 1924, Reprinted under the title " O' Neill Talks about His Plays" in Cargill et al., London: Peter Owen, 1964, p: 111

THE EMPEROR JONES

By virtue of its style, which is highly experimental, The Emperor Jones may be looked upon as the first major American Drama in the expressionistic mode. The play charts a difficult course between realism and expressionism. In its inception it was not much different from the realistic plays of the past, but its style is what makes it experimental. Two points are to be noted as regards the play's theme:- first, O' Neill emphasizes the distortion of human relationships resulting from greed, and he also exhibits the futility of man's effort to free himself from the inescapable shadows of the past which he buried in his soul, and the irrational forces which threaten to wreck the structure of the rational world.

The Emperor Jones relates the story of an American negro who has escaped from the gaols and taken refuge in an island in the West Indies where the Whites have not yet got their hold. Possessing a shrewd and calculating mind, this convict who was a pullman porter, becomes the ruler of the island. He puts on all the mannerism of the Whites and manages to feed the dwellers that he could never come to harm but by a silver bullet. Meanwhile, as he exploits his subjects to the utmost, he suspects a rebellion among his rule. He decides to flee from the island and escapes to the Great Forest with a revolver loaded with five lead bullets and a silver one. After this the story suddenly switches gears and a lot ofthings begin to happen. Jones's process of disintegration starts. The forest, full of strange sounds, dark shadows and queer happenings conjures up in his mind the visions of his ancestral past. They haunt

him and as he encounters one vision after another, he becomes stricken with terror and fires wildly in the dark. All the while, the beat of the tom-tom in the background increases in volume and intensity. In the begining, Jones was a defiant and arrogant king, but how he is a creature stripped of all the pretensions of courage and defiance, on the verge of a nervous breakdown. As he scrambles out of the Forest, the natives lie in wait for him, ready to shower him with silver bullets. O' Neill's delineation of Jones's character is profoundly psychological and he externzlizes his inner most feelings and fears. So in his objectification with the help of such symbolic instruments as the brooding forest, the tom-tom, the revolver and the silver bullet, he has, as Doris V. Falk puts it--- " effected a dynamic synthesis of symbol and dramatic action".[1]

The Great Forest is symbolic of man's primitive past as well as the personal and collective unconscious in which he relives that past. An abode of haunting mysteries, the Great Forest is "not just a place where something happens to Jones; it is part of what happens to him, a primeval elemental force which literally and figuratively strips him of the superfices of civilization".[2] It is " a well of darkness dividing the world" and gives the impression of relentless immobility and brooding implacable silence. The Forest is the focal

---

1. Falk, Doris V., O' Neill and The Tragic Tension, Rutgers Univ. Press, 1958, p. 70.
2. Whitman, R.F.,--" O' Neill's Search for Language of the Theatre in " The Quarterly Journal of Speech V. XLVI, 2 April 1960, p. 149.
3. Nine Plays Op.cit, p. 17.

point of the play, for it is here that Jones begins and ends his long journey into the night of his personal and racial past.

Many critics have pointed out O' Neill's predilection for the potency of pure sound on the stage. O' Neill's fondness for aural effects can be seen in his early writings— the sound of the dripping water of the iceberg in Fog and the whistle in Bound East for Cardiff. The Emperor Jones makes a more continual use of sound effects than any other O' Neill play. Primary is the tom-tom which begins in Scene I and " continues at a gradually accelerating speed from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play".[1] The sound effects provided by the revolver and tom-tom not only furnish theatrical excitement but effect a fusion of the physical and psychic action. In addition to these sounds, the sounds made by Jones himself in Scenes IV to VII contribute to the dominant impression of a mysterious environment hostile to Jones. His shrieks and moans combined with the uncanny sound of the slaves and witch-doctor in the final forest scene to represent his total dissociation from his conscious self and the victory of the irrational forces of his primitive unconscious.

The function of the tom-tom is manifold. As a critic says—" It is an instrument of the war dance of the natives who are getting their courage worked up to face Jones; it echoes Jones's awareness of the rythmic flow of the history of his race

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 14
2. Goyal, Op.cit, p. 179

since the primitive past". The tom-tom also "externalizes the fear of Jones, with whose heart-beats it perfectly synchronizes."[1] The cries and wails of the natives and slaves, and the dancing of the witch-doctor are rhythmically accompanied by the beats of the tom-tom. And finally the beats ominously remind Jones of his impending doom.

The haunting of Jones's mind begins in Scene II where " the sombre monotone of the wind lost in the leaves moans in the air" and builds up an eerie atmosphere. It "serves but to intensify the impression of the forest's relentless immobility...throwing into relief its brooding implacable silence,"[2] thus heightening the frightening quiet of a wilderness which contains Jones's repressed guilts and racial memories. Finally it prepares for the appearance of the little "formless fears" at the end of the scene and they emit " a tiny gale of low mocking laughter like a rusting of leaves."[3] These sounds function both melodramatically and expressionistically projecting the protagonist's fear on to external sounds and effectively dramatizing Jones's insecutity in an environment which increasingly disregards the forces of reason.

While speaking of aural effects, one cannot miss one vital sound in the play— the croon of the witch-doctor. As Egil Tornqvist observes, the croom is clearly a recapitulation of two continuous sound effects, both representations of Jones's fear—" the growing sound of the tom-tom punctuated by revolver shot."[4] The first of

---

1. Ibid, p. 179 2. Nine Plays, p. 17 3. Ibid, p. 20
4. Tornqvist, E. A Drama of Souls: Studies in O' Neill's Supernaturalistic Technique, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1969 p. 158.

these effects has stimulated extensive criticism, having been described by various critics as the union of the physical and psychological,[1] a premonition of approaching punishment and the climatic recoil of internal guilt,[2] and a symbol of "brooding fate, a predestination".[3] Certainly the heart-beat rate of the tom-tom indicates that it weds external and internal forces, suggesting both the approach of the natives and the protagonist's deepening fears, as he conforms the have nots of his own terrified imagination. It is gorotesque, first in its emphasis on the irrational uncontrollable forces that defeat Jones; the natives themselves with their belief in charms and superstitions, represent the irrational as much as Jones's unconscious projection. Furthermore it reinforces the uncanny threatening atmosphere of the dark forest's mysterious silence and weird sounds. Finally the tometom indicates the increasing alienation of Jones from the civilized world of the super-ego. Ironically the revolver shots themselves which are the products of human technology, indicate the backward journey of Jones by punctuating the different stages leading to Jones's complete disintegration. These shots are just not feeble but self-defeating, each shot alerts the natives to Jones's exact location suggesting the impossibility of escape from one's own unconscious forces, for Brutus Jones is finally destroyed by irrational forces within himself which in his pride he has ignored.

---

1. Carpenter, F.I., Eugene O' Neill, New York, Twayne Publishers 1964.
2. Raghavcharyalu, D.V.K., Eugene O' Neill: A study, Bombay Popular Prakashen, 1965, p. 28
3. Cargill, Fagin, Fisher and; eds." O' Neill and His Plays, London, Peter Owen, 1964, p. 354.

The tom-tom, the gun-shots and the sound of Jones's vision of himself depict a universe ruled by demonic forces. Jones repeatedly cries—" Mercy, Lord, Mercy" but is answered only by beating tom-tom which fills the silence about him with a " sombre pulsation"[1].

Yet another expressionistic aspect of The Emperor Jones is the dance. Dance as an ecstatic expression of the total self interested O' Neill and he employs it in the play to show man's domination by irrational passions. Jones's response to the witch-doctor's dance is a fascinating experience. After initial fright, Jones is paralysed with wonder at this strange figure's chant and contortions, and finally he also joins in the incantations. In the cries, he beats time with his hands and sways his body to and from the waist. The spirit and meaning of the dance has entered in him. The dance becomes clearly the narrative in a pantomime in which like Jones the witch-doctor flees, he is pursued by devils, he hides, he flees again, his flight becoming ever wilder. However, the witch-doctor clearly presents the protagonist's own proud violent nature. He is naked , yet symbolically covered with blood. When the witch-doctor concludes the dance by motioning his victims with hideous comments towards the crocodile, symbolic of transcendent evil, Jones is himself reduced to animal level and squirms on his belly, nearer and nearer, moaning continually as the crocodile heaves more of its enormous bulk on the hand. The movements of the witch-doctor, the crocodile and Jones himself express the victory of the frightening forces of the unconscious.

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 33.

Apart from the fact that it is the first expressionistic play of the American theatre, the play is also significant because it is a penetrating insight into man's consciousness. Although the play seems to project the negro-problem, the negro character is used symbolically to indicate the irrational drives and destructive forces residing in the human psyche, and lurking just beneath the smooth surface of the civilized world. Critics are agreed on the point that the play is a penetrating analysis of the human psyche, dramatizing man's backward journey into the obscure past of the human race and the inward journey into the terrifying abyss of his unconscious mind.

What makes this analysis particularly poignant is the fact that O' Neill has evolved a form and technique of an appropriate experimental nature, which has presented in a concrete shape this highly complex and elusive theme. The fact that the play is brought back to its realistic, literal framework, not only points to the limits of the experimentation but also gives a sharp frame to the phantasmagoria of the preceding scenes, or the main body of the play. And in this respect The Emperor Jones presents at least at temporary resolution of the crisis of realistic dramaturgy within the framework of the realistic technique.

THE HAIRY APE

While a world of acute psychological analysis and exclusive preoccupation with the problem of irrational dimensions and primitive imagery abounds in The Emperor Jones, the next play The Hairy Ape has a more comprehensive world of vision incorpor-

ating the moral psychological and spiritual problems of modern man, presented in a contemporary social perspective, and dramatized in a highly modern idiom.

As a critic puts it, and quite rightly too, The Hairy Ape presents a "severe indictment of the modern civilization which has nothing fairer to show than a world of alienation and despair, of stratification and regimentation, of anomely and disvalues, of lonely crowds and naked societies." [1].

The play is multifaceted in its presentation of theme. Though the central theme of the play is man's quest for identity, the modern man " who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal, and has not acquired in a spiritual way",[2] it gives rise to various other problems. The confusion between man and machine is a favourite theme of the modern. A realm of automatons serves as the background of the play, where the machine is in full control, dominating the actions of men on land and sea. O' Neill himself pointed this out in an interview in 1922. According to him the end of the first scene, where men jump up mechanically, file through the door silently close upon each other's heels in what is very like a prisoner's lockstep was symbolic of men who are the slaves of machinery. But he went on to announce a deeperimplication ..." In a large sense it applies to all of us because we are more or less the slaves of convention, or of discipline or of a rigid formula of some sort".[3] Hence beneath

---

1. Goyal, B.S., Op.cit, p. 181
2. Cited in Clark, B.H., Eugene O' Neill: The Man and His Plays, New York, Dover Publications 1947, p. 84
3. Ibid , p. 84.

the social theme is a more profound philosophical theme, and the automaton effect provides insight into both. The problem presented therefore has much broader implications than the immediate success or failure of Yank in his quest for identity. The modern world which disregards human emotions and aspirations has left him stranded. Nobody feels the need to belong more urgently and strongly than Yank, and the one thing that made his life endurable was that he belonged, or rather he felt himself to be a necessary and vital part of a social order. But he gradually realized that his desire to belong was impossible and futile. As O' Neill explained in a letter to the New York Herald Tribune—

" Thus not being able to find "harmony" on earth, nor in the heavens, he's in the middle, trying to make peace taking the woist punches from the bot of them."[1]

Yankfaces a series of rebuffs, until he feels like a Kafka hero whose only sin was being born. Successive rejections lead to a complete alienation culminating in a fantastic death of this grotesque protagonist and bringing home the deeper meaning of the action.

O' Neill's environments always offer visual commentary on his characters and occasionally characters are an integral part of these environments, presenting a human setting which corresponds to the physical setting. But whatever the composition of his expressionistic settings, all of them share an important structural and thematic unity— they are stylized abstractions of man's feelings

1. Ibid, p. 84.

of alienation in this universe, or of the inner conflicts which torment him, or both. Thus the settings of The Hairy Ape and also The Emperor Jones express a sense of entrapment by dlenforces. There is an expressionistic deformation of external environment to reflect the protagonist's inner alienation. The opening stage directions dictate that " the treatment of this scene should by no means be naturalistic."[1] These symbolic environments communicate the fact of man's entrapment by impersonal, hostile forces, resulting in a loss of communication. Here the enclosure motif becomes more explicit with settings which resemble cages in Scenes I, III, VI and VIII. This reflects an important variation on the theme of The Emperor Jones, where Jones is destroyed by internal forces, whereas Yank is entrapped by external forces and the modern God, Steel, which he defies at the expense of his own security and ultimately, his life. The bars and cage effect, prevailing from the begining to the end of the play is a marvellous image of the human condition. The play makes clear that Yank is not simply an alienated proletarian, but a representative of the human race, who feels out of place in a modern universe.

The opening of The Hairy Ape is a fine example of his experiment with the expressionistic mode. The curtain rises on " a tumult of sound"[2] suggesting the sound pollution of the industrial age and is oft repeated as a drama ic device in the play. The constancy of the sound is fitting, for even during leisure hours,

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 39
2. Ibid, p. 39.

the men resemble automatons. O' Neill himself directly suggests that the stokers " shouting, cursing, laughing, singing "produce" a confused inchoate uproar swelling into a sort of unity, a meaning "which is like' the bewildered ferocious baffled defiance of beast in a cage".[1] This symbol of entrapment is a dominant feature of the play and will gradually be developed and made more significant till the climactic scene at the Zoo.

O' Neill's synthesis of expressionism and symbolism may best be seen in the description of the fire-man's forecastle. "The effect sought after is the cramped space in the bowels of a ship imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage. All the stokers are caged here; they cannot raise their heads against the force exploiting them. They cannot stand upright." [2]

Another example is the repetition by other stokers of words spoken by Yank. The voices of the stokers display mechanical order with short staccato phrases and sentences which seem punched out by a machine. This mechanical quality is made explicit whenever the stokers speak in chorus. When Yank cynically tries to "tink", all the other stokers with the same cynical mockery repeat the word "tink", and " the chorussed word has a brazen metallic quality, as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a general uproar of hard barking laughter."[3] The dully mechanical and monotonous repetition of true words by the stokers suggest their lack of individuality and explain the truth that all of them are reduced to the level of mechanical beings by the force of external circumstances.

---

1. Ibid, p. 39
2. Ibid, p. 39
3. Ibid, p. 42

This synthesis of animal symbolism and mechanical symbolism results in a distortion of human environment and personality.

Yank ofcourse personifies this environment in the opening scene identifying himself with Steel and representing tohis fellow stokers " the very last word in what they are, their most highly developed individual".[1] We can also interpret it as a satire on American individualism, which can mistakenly make a man proud of his own worth, capability and role in matters of importance. That is why he has been depicted as " broader, fiercer, more truculent, more sure of himself than the rest."[2] He takes pride in identifying himself with steel and machine claiming----

I'm de ting in coal... de punch behind it... I am steel and coal an' motion".[3] Yank's very being is enmeshed in the power and energy of a metal which obviously symbolises the modern industrial world and he is a complete and ideal product of this mechanical deity.

Flanking Yank are two other characters, Paddy and Long through whom a marked contrast is presented. Long, who calls the men comrades and tries to inclite them to revolution is a spokesman of the Communist school, and who is thinking in terms of the future of man. Paddy is a wizened old Irishman whose face is " extremely monkey-like with the sad patient pathos of that animal in his small eyes."[4] Though he romanticizes the past, he is well aware of the futility of his speech, when he thinks of the modern workers caged in steel, denied a sight of the sky, like bloody apes in the zoo.

---

1. Ibid p. 40
2. Ibid p. 40
3. Ibid p. 48
4. Ibid p. 42

Out of place like everyone else, Paddy truly perceives the tragedy of modern man's alienation from nature.

Scene III is beyond doubt the core of the by virtue of being highly experimental and symbolic in nature. Two lines carefully drawn in the preparatory scenes converge. Two totally different worlds clash in the central scenic image of the play. Before Mildred descends in the stokehole to satisfy her curiosity, the atmosphere there is heightened by fusing several scenic means of expression-- lighting, sound, collective action. The overall lighting is specified as dim, the place is lit by a lone electric bulb " which just sheds enough light through the murky air laden with coal dust to fill up masses of shadows everywhere." [1] Against this background of dimness, the special effect employed gathers extra significance--

" A line of men, stripped to the waist are before the furnace, they use the shovels to throw open the doors. Then from these fiery round holes in the black, a flood of terrific light and heat pours full upon the men who are outlined in silhouette in the crouching in human attitudes of chained gorillas."[2]

The sinister atmosphere suggests man's entrapment once again. These shadows add a note of mystery and haunting quality to this mechanized atmosphere.

The lighting of The Hairy Ape is considerably more complex, operating on several levels. The recurrent contrast of dark and

---

1. Ibid p. 35
2. Ibid p. 55

light dramatizes the conflict between Yank and Mildred, the powerful stoker and the decadent socialite. Yank's black colour itself suggests vitality untamed, whereas Mildred's whiteness is that of a corpse drained of life. They represent, as Tornquist observes, a larger conflict between the sub-race and the super-race the ruled and the ruling class, and their confrontation in the stokehole symbolizes the class's utter lack of comprehension of each other.[1]

There is a predominance of sound effects too, in this scene. Fire engines and steel here contribute to create a dissonant yet rhythmic music of the modern machine age. Unobtrusively, by means of sound effect, O' Neill warns us of the forthcoming conflict. We hear " the brazen clang of the furnace doors as they are flung open or clammed shut, the grating teeth-gritting grind of steel against steel, of crunching coal".[2] If the powers still seem balanced in this description, another mechanical sound soon deprives Yank of his view that the sub-race alone partakes of the steely strength. " A whistle is blown; a thin shrill note from somewhere overhead in the darkness".[3] Insulted by Mildred who calls him a filthy beast, Yank hurls his steel shovel after her towards the iron door, which has just clanged shut, imprisoning Yank, as it were, in his cage. The shovel hits the steel bulkhead with a clang and falls shattering on the steel floor. From overhead the whistle sounds again in a long angry insistent command".[4] Yank's attempt to fight steel with steel, the world's materialism

---

1. Tornqvist, E., Opcit, p. 84
2. Nine Plays, p. 55
3. Ibid, p. 56
4. ~~Tornqvist, Opcit, p. 49.~~
4. Ibid, p. 59

with his own is doomed to fail. As Tiusanen notes, the voice of metal is turned against Yank and the sound effect bring closer to us the feeling of alienation.[1] Noteworthy enough, the stokers are trapped, not only within a cage, but inside the mechanical monster which is the ship itself. Torngvist[2] observes that the infernal ship is frighteningly personified. The men work and play in the bowels of the ship. They refer to the ship as a woman, hungry and ever asking for more. This atmosphere indicates the condition of a race enslaved by machine. As long as one identifies with this environment and gives it unquestioning loyalty, they are safe. Yank too had been complacent in the knowledge that he is "steel" ! But his confrontation with Mildred shatters his illusions, and leads to a dim self-awareness symbolized by his "Thinker" pose in the subsequent scene.

Scene IV, which is a return to the forecastle furnishes a contrast of situation. Hurt in the very heart of his pride, he sits in the exact attitude of Rodin's Thinker? A new variation of the relationship betwe n the individual and the group is developed in this scene. Yank has always been a chorus leader. Now his people are against him. It is clear that O' Neill uses the chorus and sound effects in order to bring closer tous the fact of the antagonist's separation from his environment experienced by his inarticulate hero. Furthermore, the dialogue in Scene IV is intended mainly to explain, lengthen and rationalize the decisive moment included in

---

1. Tiusanen, Timo. "ONeill's Scenic Images", Princeton Univ. Press, 1964.

2. Torngvist, p.

the previous scene. This elaboration is necessary since a remarkable part of the emotional impact has until now been given only in stage directions.

The externalization of the experiences of the protagonist which also obliquely suggest the universal phenomena of alienation of man is presented in Scene V. On Fifth Avenue" a flood of mellow tempered sun" is in startling contrast with the gaudy display of wealth in the windows. " The intermittent electric lights" winking out the incredible prices" of commodities displayed in the shop windows highlight " the magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by materialism."[1]

The contrast within the setting which the lighting points out, manifests a striking display of the misplaced value of a materialistic society. The group of church goers Yank and Long meet on Fifth Avenue give the impression of uniformity or precisely automatism.

" A procession of gaudy marionnettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankensteins in their detached mechanical unawareness."[2]

This can be interpreted as yet another variation on the theme of alienation. The function of this group made more homogenous by identical clothes and voices is to demonstrate that a stoker is not even noticed by the well-to-do. Though Yank deliberately lurches into theme, he is barely given a glance until he commits a crime by preventing a gentlemen from catching a bus, and is arrested. Here is a powerful dramatization of the loss of identify of the protagonist and the mechanization of human life.

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 66 2. Ibid. p. 69

In the next scene, the cage image is revived with a significant variation in the setting of the prison where Yank is sent:

" The cells extend back diagonally from right front to left rear. They donot stop but disappear in the d rk background as if they ran on numberless into infinity."[1]

The iron walls separating the prisoners in the cells create a haunting sense of isolation, the bars suggesting entrapment, isolation and alienation.

Yet another illusion of Yank, that of taking revenge is broken as Scene VII shows. He joins the union for workers and for the first time feels that he belongs. It is a gross misconception though, he soon realizes. He is promptly ousted from the local as a provocator when he starts preaching his idea of a violent revenge. This time O' Neill provides a silent chorus; eight or ten men are needed to over power Yank. The scene is placed partly inside and partly outside the office of the I.W.W. When Yank sits again outside the locale in the position of Rodin's "Thinker", he comes most close to self-understanding in the whole play—

Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly... Feedin' your face, —Sinkers and coffee, dat don't touch it. It's way down at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it and yuh can't stop it. It moves and everything moves. It stops and de whole world stops... Steel was me and I owned the world. Now I ain's steel and the world owns me."[2]

---

1. Ibid p. 72 2. Ibid p. 83

Using the verbal image of steel, Yank sees himself as a victim of spiritual, or if the word is too fine, mental dissatisfaction with the machine age.

The concluding and climatic scene is the most memorable of O' Neill's strokes of fantasy, where Yank comes face to face with the gorilla at the zoo. Comically he tries to identify with the gorilla and imagines that it understands his problems, causing him to free the ape in order to shake his hand. Ironically the ape squeezes him to death.

Yank had come to the zoo with desire that if he did not belong to the world, at least in the zoo he may find a creature with who he is in harmony and there at least he will belong. But this is not the story of a natural man purposeful in his animality too. If the world is empty, so is Yank; if it has lost its harmony with nature, so has he and his last vain effort to find something which will give meaning to life, ends in death. In O' Neill's words, the action indicates that as " Yank can't go forward and so he tried to go back.... But he cannot go back to 'belonging' to nature either, which is symbolized significantly by the gorilla's murder of him".[1]

Yank cannot be left free, but in meeting the gorilla Yank meets society in another incarnation. Thus he may be said to have destroyed himself.

Yank's longing to be with the gorilla suggests man's longing to shake off the burden of intellect and transcend the anguish ofbeing human and the silence of sinister laughter

---

1. Cited in Clark, Op.cit., p. 84.

that his exaltations are met with, suggest the hostile indifferent forces of the universe which are insensitive to man's quest for meaning and harmony.

The ending of the play is at best ambiguous. As Yank dies, O' Neill writes a stage directions—" ... And perhaps the Hairy Ape at last belongs."[1] " Perhaps" sounds a significant note of doubt, because in the earlier part of the play, the stoker does belong. What makes Yank a heroic figure is his intense and valiant quest for meaning and belonging, when his earlier sense of security in shattered. He has been created as a tragic figure representing the anguish and dilemma of the modern world and like all tragic figures he is destined to be destroyed.

Tilled with black humour, the play is quite contemporary in its tragicomic view of man. Contemporary in its philosophy which is modern existentialism, Yank demonstrates man's need to belong but when he does belong as in the beginning his life is inauthentic, dependent on an outside force to give it meaning. For there is, as Sartre asserts, no transcedent realm which gives life meaning, and when Yank securely belongs to the Great God Steel he is performing an act of bad faith which sacrifices his freedom and responsibility. Behind the play lies the meaning that life has no meaning except for the meaning that man gives it and Yank's flight from this truth is an escape from his humanity. His despair is the modern existential despair at willing to be oneself which takes the form of a search for ultimate meaning outside himself.

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 88.

Thus The Hairy Ape projects man's attempt to come into harmony with his world and find, to what he can belong. In doing so it dramatizes the same theological quest that forms the basis for Welded and The Fountain. Its theatrical success parallels that of Emperor Jones but its artistic success is greater because it is more comprehensive and contemporary in its presentation of the problems that it attempts to deal with.

.....

Desire Under The Elms - Psychological Realism, Mythical Structure and Symbolic Overtones (1924).

With Desire Under the Elms, O' Neill reverted to his favourite mode of playwriting, that is realism flavoured by incidental symbols and a marked psychological dimension. The play is appearing to the theatre-going audience and readers by virtue of the powerful drama of love, hate and possession it presents. Its experimental value lies in an effective visualisation of the inner world of the protagonists in concrete theatrical terms and in an imaginative fusion of symbolism and realism. Before attempting an analysis of the technical and experimental aspects of the play it would be appropriate to give a brief account of its theme and situation.

Ephraim Cabot, a New England farmer and a highly religious Puritan, had lived a life of non-communication with his first two wives and his three sons because he is an irascible old man and very hard to please. The vast rocky farm which he has maintained with hard labour, he holds with a fierce possessiveness Ephraim is both feared and intensely hated by his three sons, Simeon, Peter and Eben who struggle against his mistress, his omnipotent will and desire to steal his farm, his mistress, his gold, in short his generative principles"[1]. When they can bear no more of his oppressions, the elder two sons decide to leave

1. Raghavcharyalu, Op cit, p. 56

for California in search of gold mines and secretly sell their share of the farm to Eben. Meanwhile Ephraim brings home a third wife, a young and voluptuous woman in her mid-thirties and this marks the beginning of a fierce struggle between the father, the son and the stepmother to possess the farm in order to give a direction and meaning to their insecure and lonely lives. A parallel can possible be drawn between the dilemma of these three characters and that of the protagonist of The Hairy Ape in that each is obsessed by the desire to feel secure, to identify himself, to belong. But whereas Yank's dilemma is operative on a metaphysical level too as a problem of everyman, the limited understanding and desire of the characters in Desire Under the Elms do not let them stray beyond obsession and the hankering for material possessions.

Eben, the youngest son, suffers from a tremendous Oedipus complex and is mentally overpowered by the spirit of his dead mother. Ebenhs mother had collapsed due to the physical and mental tortures Ephraim had inflicted on her. Eben burns with feelings of revenge and this obsession combined with a longing for the farm which he thinks, rightfully belongs to his mother stirs him for the usurpation and overthrow of Ephraim. The situation is complicated by the fact that Eben and Abbie are attracted to each other from the very moment they are confronted. The development of a love-hate relationship between the two is an intricate and fascinating experience. Both are motivated initially by purely selfish reasons. Abbie plans to have a child

by Eben(since her husband is too old) and so get possession of the farm. But while Eben's incestuous interest in his step-mother is motivated by his desire to avenge his father and possess the farm. But while on the conscious level he covets the farm, at a subconscious level, deeper emotional needs motivate his action. Abbie is both the mother and the mistress. Their coming together results in a transfiguration of desires. Eben's desire for revenge and Abbie's for the farm change into a passionate desire for each other and soon Abbie is pregnant with Eben's child. Suspicion rears its ugly head in Eben's mind. He suspects a foul play on the part of Abbie, curses and abandons her. Abbie and Eben enter the process of error and trial and Abbie proves her sincere passion for him by killing the child and Eben by consciously sharing in her crime proves his love too. Together the lovers face their tragic fate in a spirit of love and understanding and emerge as purified and ennobled and heroic.

Though the story mainly revolves round the passion of the two lovers, Ephraim's presence lends it a new dimension and richness of texture. He is the one who sets the dramatic section in motion and causes the operation of the dramatic irony. In the final scene his lonely figure, immutable and undefeated, clinging to his farm as to his puritan creed, creates a haunting dramatic image.

At its least complex, the play can be seen as a convincing realistic, drama of the 19th century life on a New England farm. In its psychological penetration and down to earth realism, it reminds one of the works of Zola. But while Zola's

psychological realism is based on an acute microscopic analysis characters, O' Neill's tends to rely on Freudian concepts and theories.

Although the play bears all the characteristic features of O' Neill's social and psychological realism, it does not stop at that. It also encroaches upon the realm of tragedy in many ways. In Desire Under the Elms O' Neill employed a technique which he later took up later in Mourning Becomes Electra, 1931 with far greater dexterity and elaboration. It was the creation of a tragic play on the framework of an ancient Greek tragedy, so that his own concepts may again greater strength and universality.

In creating a tragedy by analogy, O' Neill turned to the Phaedra-Theseus-Hippolytus plot of Euripidean fame. But the connection with the original legend is rather loose and distant, and the parallels are submerged in the framework of the modern play. The most striking parallel is the incest motive itself. But unlike Phaedra, Abbie succeeds in her liaison with her stepson. Both Eben and Hippolytus suffer from a complex-- they keep thinking of their respective mothers and are consequently haunted by their own thoughts. There are certain innovations too. O' Neill modifies the character of Hippolytus to suit his own dramatic purposes. Eben's affair with Min, a village whore with whom the father as well as the sons have slept is O' Neill's instrument for chalking out the usurpation theme. In the original legend however, Hippolytus is a chaste

character. The modification is also evident in the murder of Ephraim's supposed child. As Edgar F. Racoy, Jr. in his little essay on Desire Under the Elms makes clear.

> " The curse on the sonoriginally uttered by Theseus is transferred to Eben who is the rightful father. Ephraim also utters a curse, the curse of God, but the crucially climactic curse is Eben's. Eben's curse is uttered against his son in the throes of error and rashly; Abbie proves as implacable an instrument of fate as Poseidon. Like Theseus however it is Ephraim who is left alone, surveying the wreck of his kingdom".[1]

In the ancient Greek legend of Euripides, there is a supernatural machinery at work behind the scene in the form of Gods and goddesses. The whole tragedy is brought about there because Hippolytus had shown his favour for Artemis which had enraged Aphroditis. There is a similar sense of power beyond human control operative in Desire Under the Elms too, but they are supposed to be the irrational forces of the human personality. In this play the sin is the Freudian sin of repression which leads to incest. The supernatural machinery is here substituted by the complex and destructive forces of the human psyche. In the ancient tradedy the characters are pawns in the hands of the supernatural forces and are destroyed by the rivalry of conflicting deities.

1." Myth as Tragic Structure in Desire Under the Elms — Edgar F. Racoy, in O' Neill: Twentieth Century vies a collection of critical essays ed. John Gassner, Englewood Cliffs N.J. Prentice Hall, 1964, p. 60

The protagonists in Desire Under the Elms are destroyed but the forces of destruction here reside in the human soul itself.

O' Neill with his familiarity with the Freudian psychology dramatizes these complexes. Eben's Oedipus complex and the obsession for revenge and Abbie's desire for a child and their mutual sexual urge, all combine to throw them into a situation where they later become helpless. O' Neill steps into the Jungian world when he brings in the spirit of the dead mother The continued presence of the dead mother seems to be lurking in the background and seems to be controlling and manipulating the action inath queer way. In the end the lovers even as they come to realize their feelings for each other are destroyed. It is noteworthy that O' Neill never shows the sinners to die; rather they are shown to live a death in life. Ephraim has triumphed in the end for he has taken his revenge on Abbie and Eben but what is his fate? Condemned ironically to the rocky farm which he has so passionately possessed, he is doomed to its solitary atmosphere in the same way as Lavinia Mannon in Mourning Becomes Electra was when she enters the whited sepulchre for the last time and nails the door shut.

The setting of the play is highly symbolic. The two brooding elms provide the central symbol of the play. They are presented as in the words of Loech" characters almost"[1] and the house is a character too. To him the elms represent the secret dominance of the female in action[2] while it also possible to

---

1. Loech, Clifford, Eugene O' Neill, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd 1963, p. 48.
2. Ibid p. 48.

to relate them more specifically to the influence of the mother over Eben. Doris V. Falk[1] suggests that the elms stand not just for woman but for nature itself; whose violated spirit works vengeance through Eben. The description of the Elms certainly makes it clear that they are female and represent nature and their warped quality suggests not just the suffering of the dead mother but the fearsome nature of the strong irrational force. which have to be appeared. Their description is significantly suggestive—

> "The elms brood over the house with a sinister maternity... a crushing jealous absorption.... They are like exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands and hair on its roof and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and rest on the shingles"[2]

The symbolism of the elms is not direct and explicit. Their meaning is grasped only when the characters become aware of their presence and as the elms become part of the action. For instance, Ephraim associates the evil he feels in the house with something dropping from the trees; their significance is made psychologically plausible, their symbolism an element of the play's core. They do not warp the action in order to justify their presence.

Though their appalling humanness derives from their contact with the house, their contrast with the house is more instructive suggesting both the nature versus man and woman versus man conflicts. The sickly grayish walls of the farm house its state of disrepair

---

1. Falk, Doris V. , Eugene O' Neill and the Tragic Vision: An Interpretative study of the plays. Rutgers Univ. Press 1953.
2. Nine Plays, Prologue to Desire Under the Elms, p. 136.

and its faded green shutters are in opposition to the elms and the opening stage direction emphasizes this...." the green of the elms glows but the house is in shadow, seeming pale and washed out by contrast".[1]

The setting thus contrasts the vitality of nature with the relative vapidity of man's edifices and also asserts the conflict between nature's affirmative fecundity and the "sickly grayish" Puritanism of Ephraim Cabot. Nature's fertility lies within the woman and the trees are symbolically given female characteristics, but their diseased, deformed aspects makes it also clear that they symbolize a particular female--- Eben's mother.

The incongruity inherent in the elms is also an expressionistic device, a projection of the incongruity of the character's desires. Eben wants a lover, a mother and vengeance. His purposes are lustful, sinister yet finally redeemed in the true love he discovers in Abbie., Abbie's motivations are equally complex, an unusual melange of lust maternal love and greed, also redeemed by genuine love. The complexity of these desires is reflected in the setting with its oxymoronic sinister maternity its dual function of protecting and subduing the characters. Their warped irrational power, that of the dead mother demands vengeance for the suffering caused it by the father, because only appeasement of these furies will allow the return of warmth and life to the Cabots.

---

1. Ibid, p. 137.

Though the play is not as boldly experimental as the early plays, there are certain scenes and situations which attract our attention by virtue of their effective exteriorisation of the inner complex and elusive experiences of the characters. There is the bedroom scene in Part I scene II of the play where the relationship between Abbie and Eben is objectified. Then after that follows the love making scene, a dramatic complex and fascinating experience. These two scenes are important thematically because of their quality of visualizing inner experiences and dramatizing psychological states and dimensions. Technically the effect of Scene II is pantomimic. It reveals thettwo bedrooms on the top floor of the Cabot house. It is the evening ofan hot summer day, two months after Abbie has made her appearance in the farm. Eben is sitting on his bed in his room in undershirt and pants. In the other room Abbie and Ephraim are sitting side by side on the edge of their bed in night shirt and night dress. Suddently, " Eben gets up and paces up and down distractedly... Abbie hears him.... Her eyes fasten on the intervening wall with concentrated attention Eben stops and stares. Their hot glances seem to meet through the wall. Unconsciously he stretches out his arms for her and she half rises. Then aware he mutters a curse at himself and flings himself face downward on the bed, his clenched fists above his head, his face buried in the pillow. Abbie relaxes with the faint sigh but her eyes remain fixed on the wall; she listens with all her attention for some movement from Eben."[1]

---

1. Ibid p. 171.

The multiple set and the pantomime help to inform the audience of Eben's desire for Abbie even before he becomes fully aware of it himself. Their mutual desire has gradually reached a bursting point. We become aware as we watch the scene that what Abbie had earlier pronounced, that nature will beat Eben, is gradually coming true. The irony of the situation is that while the husband and wife, Ephraim and Abbie are seated on the same bed, an impenetrable barrier seems to exist between him, suggesting non-communication, non-understanding and no concern for each other, whereas there is no barrier between the lovers despite the fact that there is an actual physical barrier— a wall. After Ephraim leaves the room in a fit of temper at the indifference of his wife, the lovers finally come together....

" Eben and Abbie stare at each other through the wall. Eben sighs heavily and Abbie echoes it, Both become terribly nervous, uneasy. Finally Abbie gets up and listens, her ear to the wall. He acts as if he saw every move she was making, he becomes resolutely still. She seems driven into a decision--- goes out the door in rear determinedly."[1]

The attempt of the playwright in this scene is to express the undercurrent of the subconscious to show that there is a power beyond human control, almost equivalent to the supernatural machinery in Greek that has the entire situation in its grip. This may be called life force too-what Abbie calls " nature " which " makes ye want to grow into something else till ye're J'ined with it."[2]

---

1. Ibid p. 174
2. Ibid p. 164.

The scene where Abbie and Eben enact their drama of passionate love is also significant from the point of view of technique. There is an effective externalization of the elusive feelings and complex emotional states in this love scene where we are made aware through subtle technique devices of the presence of the dead mother. The parlour is the place where this drama is enacted. The parlour which seems to be haunted by the ghost of Eben's 'Maw' also indicates that powers beyond human control and comprehension are operant here. It is again a repressed room like a tomb where the family has been interred alive. Eben is constantly haunted by her memories and gives way to a burst of crying. Abbie though overwhelmed by her passionate desire for him comforts Eben with soft words and there is " a sincere maternal love in her manner and voice, a horribly frank mixture of lust and mother love"[1] and then as if a screen had been removed, the no mother's ghost disappears and despite their adultery and incest, the two make love free of guilt. Unconciously their own plans have been fulfilled too. Abbie has at last succeeded in winning Eben's heart and Eben thinks he has made his mother happy by encroaching upon the father's property. " It's her vengeance on him " he says"so she can rest quiet in her grave."[2]

Another scene worth discussing is the festive scene where Ephraim celebrates the birth of his son. This scene is not important for any technical quality, buth rather O' Neill has been able to successfully convey the deeper implications of the situation without resorting to any extra-ordinary technical innovation. It is an occasion for much celebration for Ephraim

---

1. Ibid p. 178
2. Ibid p. 179

who wrongly thinks that he has fathered a child at his age. The room crowded with revellers and villagers, the parish priest and the farmers. The child lies in a crib in the bedroom while Abbie is sitting in the room where the feast is going on. The musician tunes up his fiddle and starts playing. Ephraim, quite drunk, brags about his sexual prowess. There are three levels of consciousness in the whole situation. The triumphant bragging of Ephraim is at the lowest level. Then there is the village crowd who pass ironic comments on the old man and make fun of him, which he is totally unable to comprehend. At the deepest level is the disturbed emotional state of the two lovers, Eben and Abbie, who are completely unable to take the situation as lightly as does Ephraim. In the grim silence that Abbie maintain there is the ominous indic tion of a tragedy in the offering. Thus we find that different dimensions of experience are conveyed to us in a subtle and effective way.

The play is undisputedly a combination of realism and symbolism and in this respect O' Neill stands in line with other great dramatists who had also attempted a similar mode of writing, but with a difference. Ibsen and Chekov are more subtle in the use of symbolism. The symbolism of Cherry Orchard or The Sea Gull for instance is charged with a rich poetic element which elevates and transforms the dramatic material. The symbolism of Ibsen's The Wild Duck or The Master Builder is far more gripping because Ibsen's philosophical vision is much more profound. Compared to Ibsen and Chekov, O' Neill's symbols are very raw. He is not able

to integrate his symbols into the theme of the play as successfully or subtly as say, Chekov does. The fact may be that O' Neill's symbols are too conceptual and to some extent contrived instead of being subtle and poetic like the symbolism in The Cherry Orchard or as direct and expressive as in the plays of Ibsen. O' Neill had attempted at symbolic realism as early as in Beyond the Horizon a grim dramao of fate and frustration. The symbol of the Horizon suggesting man's desire aspiration and dreams is natural and poetic. In Desire Under the Elms we feel that the symbolism of the elms is a bit superimposed and selfconscious. However this does not detract from the significance of the play. The theme is much more complex and the characters are intensely conceived. Here O' Neill has attempted a more complex human situation and the play is striking by virtue of its more complex theme and acute psychological penetration of characters and a significant element is added by the infra-structure of the Greek legend.

.....

MASK AND THE FACE AND THE SPLIT PERSONALITY: THE GREAT GOD BROWN(1924)

O' Neill struck new ground in the theatre when he completed and produced The Great God Brown. He had used the technique of masks in his earlier plays but not on such an elaborate scale. The apparitions in The Fountain, the marionettes on Fifth Avenue in The Hairy Ape and the mourners for Kukachin in Marco Millions are instances where the use of masks is theatrically effective and in some cases thematically significant, but it does not characterize the style of those plays as a whole. But the use to which the mask is employed in The Great God Brown is far more complicated and detailed, and constitutes the main stylisti feature of this play.

Writing in 1922 and 1923 on masks, O' Neill saw them as suitable for the kind of dramatic " new modern play which interested him. He envisioned three important purposes for them:

In the first place- " Looked at even from the most practical stand point of the practicing playwright, the mask is dramatic, has always been dramatic in itself" " more" suggestively dramatic than any actor's face can be"[1]. It was to O' Neill, an important device in a new non-realistic imaginative theatre which broadened the horizon of the imaginative playwright, director, actor, scenic designer and audience by elevating the theatre to the sacramental religious position it held in Greece.

---

1. " Memoranda On Masks" in Cargill, et.al., O' Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism, New York Univ. Press, 1963 P. 117.

Secondly, it was especially suitable for modern playwrights because of its high expressive potentialities. By the use of masks the playwright could express, in O' Neill's own words " those profound conflicts of the human mind which the probings of time continue to disclose to us"[1] an inner drama which constitutes one of the characteristic preoccupations and uniquely significant impulses of his time. Masks could provide the playwright a way to probe the inner forces which motivate our actions" for what at bottom is the new psychological insight into the human cause and effect but a study in masks, an exercise in unmasking"[2]

Finally, masks could universalize the actions and actors in both classical and contemporary drama. If used in Hamlet, they could, O' Neill believed, allow us to identify ourselves with the figure of Hamlet as a symbolic projection of a fate that is in each of us. The grotesque contradictions and distortions which masks can exhibit are particularly appropriate for his standard themes of illusion and reality, alienation and dissociation.

The expressionistic plays of Strindberg, Wedekind and Kaiser provide the source of his use of the mask. For them as for O' Neill, the purpose of mask was to underscore man's inner struggles and unfriendly social environments. Hence in The Hairy Ape and Lazarus Laughed, mobs of bizarre masked characters underscore society's hostility to the "outsider"—— one a thinker, the other a rebel and a prophet. But in The Great God Brown, the most complex of O' Neill's masked dramas, the mask functions to express

---

1. Ibid p. 116 2. Ibid p. 116.

the most terrible battle between the creative vital side and the spiritual ascetic side of a man's personality. It also underlines the elusive and contradictory forces of the human psyche which tear and shatter the integrity of the human personality.

There may have been certain personal and biographical reasons too for the use of masks in his plays. O' Neill was an introvert and liked to keep his inner self concealed from the public. So many of his characters wear masks and try to hide themselves from the world as well as themselves.

Thus O' Neill was fascinated with the use of masks because of its affinity with the dramatic process, its psychological significance, and its value as an " exciting stylistic revolution" in the dramatic arts. O' Neill says— " one's outer life passes in a solitude haunted by the masks of others; one's inner life passes in a solitude haunted by the mask of oneself".[1] This Pirandellian remark reveals O' Neill's constant preoccupation with the problem of illusion and reality, of concealment and discovery and its dramatisation through the symbolic use of masks.

The Great God Brown has the fullest panoply of masks any American drama has. According to O' Neill the major purpose of the play was to " portray personality and life". Masks represent incongruous clashing forces on the psychological, social, philosophical and spiritual levels. In fact, to examine the various functions of the mask would be, in effect, to explicate the play itself. The Jungian implications of the mask have been fully explore

1. "Memoranda on Masks", November 1932, Cargill et al. p. 117.

by Doris V. Falk[1] who see Dion especially as the victim of a neurotic conflict which causes his Pan persona to develop into a shadow which assimilates his ego and destroys him, but Brown, Margarret and Cybel are also victims of inner conflict to varying degrees. A prime cause of all these conflicts in almost all the characters is the society which promotes material success and complacency but ignores spiritual needs. The loneliness of Dion is a consequence of the conflicting spiritual and material forces in American society and Dion as the sensitive artist alienated from his graudulent bourgeois culture, assumes a mask, both to protect and express himself. Cybel and Margaret too protect themselves while Brown comes finally to realize that he is all mask and no soul.

It is through the masks in The Great God Brown that O' Neill offers the audience profound glimpses into the human psyche. When Dion Anthony removes his mask, what the audience sees or at any rate what the author would have them see is the naked soul of the individual. The playwright's involvement with contempoary psychological theories stimulated him to involve this particular use of the mask.

O' Neill was well aware of the grave consequences of an experiment of this nature. Masks could be theatrically fascinating but would O' Neill be able to develop a dramatic language suitable enough to accompany it. The soul of man, O' Neill felt could not

---

1. Falk, Doris V., O' Neill and the Tragic Tension; An Interpretative Study of His Plays, Rutgers Univ. Press 1958, p. 107.

be communicated to the audience in an acute an impressive way through verbal device. As Travis Bogard points out—

" The soul is subverbal and the great dramatist can do little else than to suggest it by the referential qualities of his poetry"[1]

Disappointed and even bored perhaps by the symbolism of realistic drama, O' Neill wished to present on stage " without symbolism the naked essence of being"[2] The Great God Brown has no traditional symbols. Instead the drama is presented in a non-realistic manner, revealing the inner dimensions of the human personality through a skillful use of masks.

The religio-philosophical themes which the masks express in the play are less complicated. In a letter to the New York City papers, explaining the play, O' Neill explained that the primary theme was symbolized in the name of the hero— Dion Anthony.

"Dion-Anthony... Dionysus and St. Anthony... the creative pagan acceptance of life fighting eternal war with the masochist life- denying spirit of Christianity as represented by St. Anthony"[3] The clash of Christian and Pagan principles represented a conflict of masochistic life denying impulses and human creativity. Dion and Brown are alienated not just from themselves or their society but from existence itself and only death brings reconciliation. On all levels then the masks represent the innar conflict

---

1. Bogard, T. Contour in Time, New York 1972, Oxford Univ. Press pp. 267-68.
2. Ibid, p. 268
3. Cited in B.H. Clark, Eugene O' Neill: The Man and His Plays rev. ed. New York, Dover Publications, 1947, p. 104.

and dissociation of personality and the grotesque deformation of facial features corresponding to psychological social and spiritual distortions which are familiar to all readers of drama.

Brown and Dion are the two principal characters of the play who enact man's self destructive struggle " to exist as a mask among the masks of living"[1]. Though physically they are two different characters, psychologically they represent the composite man of today, divided against himself. As a child Dion's faith in the values of love and friendship had suffered a shattering blow. His special friend William Brown had trampled upon his artistic aspirations and that was the end of all the joy in life. It was in order to protect himself from further assault as well as to keep his inner anguish and aspirations concealed from the others that Dion donned the mask of the Bad Boy Pan... reckless defiant, gayly scoffing and sensual. " The mask is however a fixed forcing of his own face... dark spiritual, poetic, passionately supersensitive, helplessly unprotected in its childlike, religious faith in life"[2]. While masked, he exhibits a cynical, rebellious and forcefully gay nature. He speaks with defiance and naked antagonism to his friend and parents. It is only when he is alone and unmasked that he reveals his inner hesitations arising from a violent conflict between the life force and death drive.

" Why am I afraid to dance? I who love music and rhythm and grace and song and laughter? Why am I afraid to live, I who love

---

1. "A Dramatist's Note book", January 1933, Carlill et al p. 122.
2. Nine Plays, p. 310

life and the beauty of flesh and the living colours of earth and sky and sea? Why am I afraid of love, I who love, love? Why am I afraid, I who am not afraid, I who am not afraid? Why was I born without a skin, O God that I must wear armour in order to touch or be touched.... why the devil was I born at all,"[1]

The mask is the armour that Dion wears to conceal himself from the world. He is torn between his desires and convictions. Though a lover of life, he cannot commit himself fully to the joys of living. This is brought out in the passionate love scene between him and Margaret.

" I love, you love, we love! Come! Rest! Relax! Let go your clutch on the world! Dim and dimmer', Fading out into the past behind! Gone! Death! New! Be born!.Awake! Live!-Dissolve into dew! into silence! ....into night ... into earth... into space.... into peace... into meaning... into joy....into God...into the Great God Pan!" [2]

Even in this moment of passionate ecstacy Dion hesitates to accept life fully. For a moment the stage lights are dimmed suggesting the moment the lovers take each other and just the next moment the lights return and we hear Dion cry—

" Wake up'.... Great Pan is dead! Be ashamed![3]

Dion's denial of life is consistent and at time nerve sneking. He believes that a static communion cannot be sustained and thus his cry of revulsion at the point of consummating~~hat~~ is indicative of the fact that inspite of his violent passion and

---

1. Ibid p.315
2. Ibid p.318
3. Ibid p.318

desire to enjoy life, he cannot overcome his inhibitions.

This can only be explained by the fact that O' Neill has set in opposition within Dion, the Dionysian anti-Christ and the Christian ascetic represented by the image of St. Anthony. When the Puritan element in him gets the better of him, Dion is repulsed by life, and denies it. The martyr and saint of the inner self counterbalances the anti-Christ of the masked self, but the intensity of each suggest the depth of the conflict that destroys Dion. This battle results in mutual exhaustion with the creative joy in life for life's sake, rendered abortive. The real self of Dion gradually becomes like that of a martyr, furrowed by pain and self torture, yet lighted from within by a spiritual calm and human kindliness, while the mask " has a terrible death-like intensity, its mocking irony... so cruelly malignant as to give him the appearance of a real demon tortured into torturing others."[1]

The victim of an Oedipus complex, scornful of father figures and abandoned by his mother at her death, Dion hankers for mother-love. He marries Margaret for this obvious reason but she cannot truely mother him as she does not know him so thoroughly well. It is in the presence of Cybel, a mother figure ofor Dion, and a whore in the eyes of society, that he is able to shed his mask and along with it all his inhibitions and be his real self.

Dion's struggle and defeat are allergorical. He is a modern everyman-afflicted with doubts and unable to communicate, who finds security only in a retreat to the mother's womb, a temporary death in life, preshadowing his ultimate annihilation.

---

1. Ibid p. 345.

But Dion is also Dionysus and must be reborn and the vessel of this rebirth is Billy Brown, a man with whom Dion had a strange relationship in life, being dependent on him for his livelihood. Inspite of their apparent conflict we become conscious of an underlying deeper link. Brown, distinguished, complacement and prosperous, is the stereotyped American businessman surrounded by material affluence. Beneath his good man mask lurks and unacknowledged selfish, materialistic and parasitic person who is unable to create or to love. Envious of Dion's capabilities as a poet and artist, he puts on his mask in order to gain the same kind of respect and admiration. But the tragedy lies in the fact that Brown follows Dion's course, suffering his agony but sharing none of his vision. As Travis Bogard says—

" while Dion is Pan, Brown is a satyr, where Dion is Mephistopheles, Brown is Faust, and where Dion is martyred, Brown is a thief who must also be martyred!"[1]

The theft of Dion's mask involves Brown in Dion's psychoses. The seizure is interesting in its own right as an illustration of what Sievers[2] terms " introjection " by which one individual takes another's personality within him and unconsciously plays that role. But for Brown it proves fatal. In his identity conflict he becomes more and more dependent on his mask, talks to it, reaches out to it like a dope fiend after a drug and convinces himself—

" I'm drinking your strength Dion, strength to love in this world, but also to die and sleep and become fertile earth"[3]

---

1. Bogard Op.cit p. 275
2. Sievers, W. David, Freud on Broadway, New York, Hermitage House, 1955, p. 111.
3. Nine Plays p. 359

The vision is blurred and his attempt to create is futile for he does not possess Dion's finer sensibilities. In the attempt to possess the something which he cannot, Brown ultimately destroys himself. But just before dying he speaks in a burst of ecstasy:

" Only he that has wept can laugh! "

But more philosophical and justified are the play's curtain lines where the policeman confronts Cybel:

Captain: Well, What's his name?

Cybel : Man!

Captain(Taking a grimy notebook and an inch long pencil from his pocket) How d' yuh spell it?[1]

And it is Brown, who in the end becomes an emblem of the human condition. But the dilemma of man is not spelt out, rather man is presented as an engima, unsolved, inexplicable in words.

Both Dion and Brown are shown to possess a certain relationship with Cybel, the Earth Mother and Whore. Her Nietzschean neopagan philosophy of eternal recurrence is the explicit moral of the play, and in her comfortable presence both Dion and Brown can unmask themselves and be soothed by her mother love. Dion sees her as Life itself and his relationship with her is not at all sexual, but rather he gratifies his lack of mother love. For Brown too, who goes to her for physical gratification, in the end she becomes the mother. Cybel is deeply sensitive as well and espouses the mystical philosophy:-

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 375

> Always Spring comes again bearing life again! Always again! Always, always, forever again! .... love and conception and birth and pain again .... spring bearing the intolerable chalice of life again.... beating the glorious blazing crown of life again."[1]

The irony is that none of the men are able to understand Cybel and her philosophy in totality. Here is in truth a simple message—" Life is all right if you let it alone " she tells Dion— " You may be important but your life is not. There is millions of it born every second."[2] These words were so meaningful to O' Neill that they became the central theme of Lazarus Laughed two years later.

Thus Dion, Brown and Cybel constitute the trio of play as far as the allegorical structure is concerned. On the other hand the presence of Margaret highlights the psychological processes in the life of Dion and Brown since both try to possess her and the masks suggest their desires and failure to do so. Margaret represents the eternal American girl-woman, simple and innocent, a person who never grows up mentally. She loves Dion but only the playful Pan-side of his character, not the vulnerable, sensitive young artist, and is able to communicate with him only when he dons his mask. Dion marries Margaret with the desire to get love, protection and understanding but she is not able to

---

1. Ibid, p. 375
2. Ibid, p. 337

reciprocate his desires. Dissatisfied and mentally upset, he turns to Cybel for fulfilment. Margaret has another lover in Brown who is desperate to get her. Brown's assumption of Dion's mask is mainly to get possession of her. But the irony of the whole situation is that along with inheriting Margaret after Dion's death, he also inherits the artist's extremely sensitive nature. Dion thinks " he is gaining the power to live creatively". Infact " he is only stealing that creative power made self destructive complete frustration and his destruction quickly follows".[1]

The play thus has a three-dimensional structure-- philosophical, psychological and allegorical, realized through an imaginative use of masks. The constant alternation between mask and face lends an elusive yet complex quality to the play. O' Neill's exploitation of the theory of mask and face is a creditable experiment, but such experiments had been made earlier too. Moreover it is not entirely organic. For example in Pirandello's plays we find a similar dischotomy between the mask and face but it is operative in a more subtle way. Pirandello believed in the basic ambiguity of the human personality. Beneath the superficially integrated personality there are a host of complex and conflicting impulses elusive selves that defy definition. This idea of the role and the existence, mask and face is dramatized effectively, with much insight and philosophical depth in Henery IV, Six Characters in Search of an Author and other plays of Pirandello. According to Pirandello people are constantly playing various roles and assuming different masks which is necessary for them in order

1. Cited in Clark, Op. cit p. 105.

to relate themselves to a chaotic world. But this constant flux of life finally submerges their dynamic and elusive selves and fixes them in a role, thus depriving them of the immense and undefined possibilities of a full blooded existence. For Pirandello, a mask is the only way of creating some meaning in existence, but it is also a desperate form of life affirmation because it is achieved at the expense of the flow of actual life processes. Thus the use of masks in Pirandello is highly subtle, philosophical and general, while in O' Neill it only serves to illustrate a well defined idea, his favourite idea of a conflict between pagan and Christian principles and in a limited way to portray the psychological conflict between individuals.

. . . . . .

LAZARUS LAUGHED - O' NEILL'S CONCEPTION OF THE SUPERMAN; A MASKED EXTRAVAGANZA

Lazarus Laughed is yet another landmark in O' Neill's search for meaning in existence. Strange enough, as we gather from B.H. Clark, it is the only play which has not been professionally acted or performed at any theatre.[1] O' Neill himsel thought it to be the most successful thing he did. He called Lazarus Laughed a " Play for an Imaginative Theatre,"[2] which is quite true for he translates here his philosophic vision into theatrical terms. It makes fascinating reading, but even then one can foresee the limitations it can pose theatrically.

The central theme of the play may be looked upon as the assertion of the affirmative philosophy of eternal recurrence, proclaimed earlier by Brown in The Great God Brown

" Only he that has wept can laugh!"

Lazarus, just risen from the grave begins to laugh softly like a man in love with God. The Chorus chant:-

" Laugh! Laugh!
There is only life
There is only laughter!
Death is no more!
Death is dead! "[3]

As B.H. Clark says, " Lazarus Laughed is a hymn to life, a cry of triumph shouted in the faces of those Christians who look upon existence as a vale of tears, the petty egotists who expe

1. Citeddin Clark, B.H., Op. cit. p. 116
2. Ibid, p. 117
3. Nine Plays, p. 389.

an everlasting happiness in heaven because they lack the courage to be content on earth."[1] The play is a strange and fascinating hybrid. The crowds in Lazarus Laughed are the protagonists of The Hairy Ape who display both animal and mechanical grotesquery; the Roman leaders, Tiberius and Caligula are tortured monstrous victims of dependent society, and Pompeia and Miriam are types of the Eternal Mistress and Eternal Mother. But the protagonist— the poet-prophet Lazarus, is set apart from the others by his laughter, his advancing youth, his totalaffirmation of existence. With his roots in both Eastern and Western religions, Lazarus is O' Neill's most ambitious archetype of the Messiah. This radically experimental, almost unstageable play also contributes to this attempt at the creation of a Superman-hero, philosopher, poet, prophet, all rolled into one.

The question arises— what drove O' Neill to this kind of experimental venture? O' Neill was well aware of the contemporary man's intense desire for spiritual communion, a relation with God and the universe. Consequently he reverses the Christian virtue of pity and humility to a point where it can meet with pagan creative joy on the ground of archetypal religious experience. Lazarus Laughed is consequently a play of all saviours— Judaeo-Christian, Graeco-Roman, Sino-Indian, whose type images converge on the centrality of perennial affirmation. The creation of the character of Lazarus was the result ofan extensive study of world religious and ancient religious philosophy. He admitted it in one of his letters—

---

1. Cited in Clark, Op. cit., pp. 117-118.

" Off and on, of late years I have studied the history and development of all religions with immense interest as being— for me at least, — the most illuminating" case-historics" of the inner life of man."[1] To which there is little doubt. Lazarus is hardly a realistic character, a full blooded human being. A modern mythical figure, his source lie in various religions and also in modern philosophy — that of Nietzsche. Lazarus is a kin to Zarathustra,[2] both being prophets and Supermen who preach a eternal recurrence and urge men to strive upward to greater glory, but he also resembles Nietzsche's conception of Dionysus in The Birth of Tragedy, one who pursues his followers to an ecstasy of revelry and laughter in which they completely lose themselves, finally killing the God so he may be reborn. Lazarus proclaims in a state of ecstasy—

> " Lonely no more ! Millions of laughing stars there are around ! ... there is no death, nor fear, nor loneliness ! There is only God's Eternal Laughter!"[3]

and then as the Nietzschean Superman he cries—

> " Let all stars be for you henceforth symbols of saviours— sons of God who appeared on worlds like ours to tell the saving truth to ears like yours, inexorably deaf... But the greatness of Saviours is that they may not save!

---

1. Letter to Martha C. Sparrow, October 13, 1929, cited by Doris Alexander, " Lazarus Laughed and Buddha", Modern Language Quarterly, 17 December, 1956, p. 359.
2. Engel, Edwin., The Haunted Heroes of O' Neill, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953 p. 179.
3. Nine Plays, p. 457.

The greatness of Man"[1] is that no God can save him-- until he becomes a God. In addition Lazarus's calm, compassionate, selfless contemplative qualities remind one of Buddha[2]-

> "Let a laughing away of self be your new right to live forever"[3]

As Krishna of the Bhagvad-Gita he reiterates--

> "But all death is men's invention"![4]

While his mystical nature and belief in the non-existence of evil recall the transcendentalism of Thorean and Emerson Obviously the play as Carpenter observes is designed to appeal to the imagination rathen than the common sense,"[5] and its mystical affirmation of eternal life is seen in the miraculous resurrections of Miriam and Lazarus. The play is in deed visionary and designed to appeal to the imagination. There is no direct address to the rationalmind.

As pointed above, O' Neill created the character of Lazarus to a great extent in the mould of Nietzsche's conception of Dionysus and Zarathustra. The doctrines propagated by this great philosopher-- the doctrine of Superman, eternal recurrence, pity and"amor fati"were reinterpreted by O' Neill to suit his own ends.

---

1. Ibid, p. 398
2. Alexander, Doris., " Lazarus Laughed and Buddha" Modern Language Quarterly Op.cit. p. 357.
3. Nine Plays, p. 419
4. Ibid, p. 402 Eugene O' Neill, Twayne Publishers, 1964
5. Carpenter, F.I., p. 119.

O'Neill was actually fascinated by the idea that Nietzsche's philosophy of power could help fill up the spiritual void of contemporary society. Hence Lazarus is created in the image of a superman-saviour-tragic hero who teaches man to live phyously, free from all inhibitions and to die fearlessly. Lazarus has over come all his earthly passions through rigid discipline of the self and reached that stage of perfection where mental calm and spiritual happiness is abundant and no sorrow touches him. Contrary to him is his wife Miriam who symbolizes the doctrines of Chiristianity. She leads a life resigned to sorrow and suffering and penance, and to her it is not life on this earth but the life hereafter that matters. Consequently her life on earth is a preparatory for the life to come. Lazarus and Miriam are poles apart as regards their beliefs and values while Lazarus affirms life, Miriam negates it.

The crowds— Nazarenes, Jews and Romans represent mankind in general, with all their follies and shortcomings, earthly passions and material desires. They are often seen to behave symbolically in the manner animals do— like curs, dogs, pigs, roosters, swine, rats, jackals, hyenas. They cannot raise themselves above this level. None of them do. Lazarus is one such individual who has transcended his earthy qualities and hence he is the Superman.

Lazarus, theSuperman believes in the Supermacy of life over death, in Nietzsche's philosophy of eternal recurrence. Yet how different is the conception of O' Neill from him

The latter believed in " the eternal cyclical repetition of allthings,"[1] that an event in history would repeat itself over and over again. But O' Neill believes only in " the regeneration of the biological abstraction, Man!" [2]

While philosophically Lazarus is presented as an alternate to Christian theory, ironically enough, he too is a martyr and a saviour come to save mankind. While Christ can be conceived as a tragic hero, because he does suffer on this earth, Lazrus does not undergo any such experience. Christ suffers in a way that permits human identification with him, which again Lazarus does not. Although Lazarus may experience physical pain during his execution, he not only does not suffer— he laughs. Though the material for tragedy exists, a man cannot be called a tragic hero if he does not suffer, does not learn, does not have a down fall ! What more can Lazarus learn, having solved the mystery of life and death! There is no inner turmoil in him, no question of "hamartia" or tragic flaw. Naturally such a figure arouses within us neither a sense of pity and fear, nor a sense of identification. As Cyrus Day puts it— " He is a symbol, an abstraction, a mere mouth piece and an inarticulate one at that, for O' Neill's ideas"[3].

The play's imaginative presentation enables the reader to endure both the repetition of the Nietzschean philosophy and the rampant grotesquery of human nature.

---

1. Cited in " O' Neill: Twentieth Century Views" ed. John Gassner, Prentice Hall Inc. 1964, p. 76
2. Ibid
3. Amor Fati: O' Neill's Lazarus as Superman and Saviour " in " O' Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays", ed. J, Gassner (Op. cit).

For O' Neill has here created one of the most unusual spectacles of modern theatre. From a play which exhibits the absolute nadir of human nature, he has created the tragic joy of Lazarus. Terrifying and pathetic is the human condition which causes the hero's death but noble and brave is the hero who dies a comic death, comic becuase it is of slight consequence in the movement of eternal life.

So much ofor the philosophical purpose behind the play. As regards technique it is radically experimental in its use of masses of masked men and women who form a shifting social setting for the action. It was O' Neill's intention to give an audience visually the sense of crowd, not as a random collection of individuals, but as a collective whole, an entity. The canvas of the play is symbolic of the vastness of the universe. The play is enacted on the stage of this world with Bethhy, Greece and Rome forming the background. Similarly, the entire mankind is involved in the action. The seven periods of life are presented in the crowd characters- Boyhood, Youth, Young, Manhood, Manhood, Middle age, Maturity, Old age. They also include seven general types of character- The simple, Ignorant; the Happy, Eager; the Self-tortured, Introspective; the Proud, Self Reliant; the Servile, Hypocritical; the Revengeful, Cruel; the Sorrowful, Resigned. In other words, the play's mobs each act as a collective character, and their choral utterances and actions are generally unified as a result.

Scenically it would have been an easy play to produce requiring only a few set pieces, arches and collumns. But the overwhelming introduction of masks is a point to reckon with. Lazarus and the principal characters present no problem. While Lazarus is unmasked because he has overcome his fear of death, the supporting characters wear half-masks, in part because they must speak line of some complexity, and their lips must be free, their voices unmuffled and in part O' Neill wishes to suggest a differente between the persona which the mask represents, often grotesque or terrifying and the simplicity of being, revealed in the mouth and lips. Thus Pompeia wears a half-mask on the upper part of her face, olive-coloured with the red of blood smouldering through, with great dark cruel eyes, a dissipated mask of intense evil beauty.

The small chorus wear oversize masks which cover their full face. They were intended toccontain megaphones. These and those of the crowd present substantial difficulties but the plan while elaborate is not complex, thoughapparently it seems so. O' Neill requires masks presenting seven personality types, following a simplified Jungian scheme for each of the traditional seven ages of man. He duplicates the scheme for women. Thus in the first scene, 98 crowd masks and seven individual masks are required. It is a staggering technical requirement not only in making the mask but in the provision of the bodies to wear them. The plan is elaborate and probably in any theatre

impractical. This might be the reason why it has never been professionally acted.

The importance of the choruses and the crowds be less in the words they chant than in the sound pattern they create. Their power is aural. They are like the drums, the grating clattering sounds of Yank's boiler room. They seek to convince not through logic or poetry but through massed power. They provide a vast orchestration for the action, to which the text is only a libretto. On the page the chorus lines appear to follow sequentially cue to cue. In the theatre however, they overlap the speeches of the protagonists, their sound and their words echoing what is said, elaborating, emphasizing and augmenting the dialogue. For example in Act 2 Scene 2, when Caligula finally faces Lazarus and realizes his power, Lazarus mocks him gently and begins to laugh. His laughter is echoed by the crowd and by Caligula himself. The crowd's laughter continues and grows as Caligula asks why he loves to kill. Lazarus's answer rides on the tide of choric laughter.

" Are you a speck of dust danced in the wind? Theme laugh, dancing! Laugh yeo to your insignificance!"[1]

It is silent for three minutes and again when Lazarus laugh again, the choric orchestration softly enhances his description of death. As he speaks, the choric laughter blends into words spersed with his phrases and echoing and overlapping

1. Nine Plays, p. 417.

them

" Men call life death and fear it
They hide from it in horror
Their lives are spent in hiding![1]....

Lazarus's next words are a direct address to the crowd which presumably will be heard in silence; but immediately following the short exhortation the chorus forth again in lines which sound contrapuntally, finally coming together in a full chorus-

Laugh, laugh! Fear is no more! Death is dead![2]

As Lazarus goes out in his charist, the choral sound is at its height.

The effect of this would be impressive, if the technical difficulty of training the chorus to speak in tempo and with the proper modulations of volume could be overcome. The second matter is that of writing words for the chorus. O' Neill has been fully aware that he cannot write sentences of any complexity whatsoever. The choric lines are short, relying on repetition and simple phrasing for their effect. Since they are always, anything more would have impeded articulation and reduced the words to the merest blur.

O' Neill once commented to the play wright, Paul Green[3] about his hopes for the American theatre of the imagination, unbounded and one in which the audience could share, as a congregation shares in the music and ritual of church service. He

1. Ibid p. 418
2. Ibid p. 418
3. Gelb, Arthur and Barbara, O' Neill, London, Jonathan Cape, 1962 pp. 602 f.

objected to the sharp division of most theatres between actors and audience, stage and auditorium and hoped that the entire theatre could be unified and charged with emotion. This can only happen when the audience actively participates in the action that takes place on stage. Then he talked of his own efforts somewhat in that direction.

> ".... what I would like to see in the production of Lazarus is for the audience to be caught up enough to join in the responses-- the laughter and chorus statements even as much as the negroes do in one of their revival meetings."[1]

This reflects the new trend in modern theatre and in some way parallels the vision of Artaud who advocated a passionate participation on the part of the audience. Although theatrically this trend did not again manny followers, but it was significant in the sense that it foreshadowed many later developments.

O' Neill, we may condlude now, is driving at the projection of the image of Man in this play. For the purpose of achieving this, he has employed the Nietzschean philosophy of eternal recurrence and modelled his protagonist Lazarus on the image of Dionysus. Here O' Neill abandons his pessimistic outlook for once, and instead of writing a ꝑract describing th pessimistic conclusions regarding man's futile search ofor a satisfactory balance between desire and ability, between the ideal and restrictions in Lazarus Laughed he proves that the goal is almost within reach. He shows that of only man drives out the evil lurking in his own consciousness, the evil of

---

[1] Ibid. pp. 602 f.

ambition, the evil of power, he can become an ideal human being. O' Neill must have shuddered to think of the possibility of a world controlled by such malformed creatures as Caligula, who are full of guile and cunning, and ambitious for fame. On the other hand Lazarus is guileless and thinks of love alone as the basis of healthy life. O' Neill, making use of Lazarus as his protagonist point out-

> " Life is for each man a solitary cell whose walls are mirrors!"[1]

O' Neill firmly believed that the greatest defect in man is this illusory idea of himself. Man is always fighting a war with different aspects of his personality and feeling himself baffled. Lazarus is the symbolic being who is liberated from this pursuit of illusions, swealth, power, empire all these are illusions. O' Neill seems to point out that death is the product of all such material and social powers. On the one hand, a bold spirit like Lazarus who is not afraid of these powers certainly has no fear of death and Caligula on the other hand represents the most vicious aspect of human social institutions with his legions and a thirst for sensuality. Lazarus is the image of Man that O' Neill tries to project and he has been fairly successful in doing so.

The play, one might add is a landmark technically and philosophically because here O' Neill has tried to combine the Nietzschean philosophy of eternal recurrence with the device of masks and his conception of the image of Man. Hence it

1. Nine Plays p. 417.

is a bold and daring experiment despite its various limitations.....

.....

"STRANGE INTERLUDE"(1928): A DRAMATIC VENTURE IN STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE

With Strange Interlude, O' Neill launched an experimental venture which was remarkable as regards its technique. The play employs the stream of consciousness device, a significant development in contemporary fiction initiated by Mrs. Virginia Woolfe. There is no biographical or critical evidence to prove that Mrs. Woolfe influenced the American dramatist in any way, but the similarity of the technical approach cannot be overlooked, because both desired to delineate the inner psychological processes for a character's mind in their works. Mrs. Woolfe of course stands as the consummate master of this form of writing, whereas O' Neill's attempt to dramatize such processes is only commendable, though theatrically not very successful. Both in O' Neill and Virginia Woolfe we sense the desire to stress the continuous flow of experience, the indefinableness of characters and external circumstances as they impinge on our consciousness. Above all both wanted to convey or communicate the impression made by one individual upon others and to reveal human personality partly through its own self consciousness and partly through the picture projected by it upon other minds.

Many critics would agree on the point that the device of inner monologue in The Strange Interlude is the outcome of O' Neill's knowledge and adaption of the Elizbethan device of asides and soliloquies. Though one cannot deny that such an influence may have been there, O' Neill's adaptation of it is far more sophisticated

and complex. Here it is not a character holding a debate with himself but the constant flow of thought of a human being from minute to minute, which was only perfectly mastered in the novels of Virginia Woolfe before O' Neill had employed it for dramatic use. For example in Jacob's Room she attempts to remove the narrator from the scene, so that the reader may seem to see the subject solely through the eyes of the people in the book. Or in Mrs. Dalloway she gives the necessary facts about people through the reflection of some other mind in the book, not from without. The presence of the narrator is felt only at times in these books. But the directionin which she is moving towards complete objectivity, not the objectivity of drama, which is limited to the enacted and the spoken word, but an objectivity in which the feelings, the meditations, the memories of theprotogonists are projected without intervention upon the mind of the reader. For example when James in To The Light House emerges into manhood. We receive his impressions of"the world of the elderly", linked with past memories and with projects for the future, through the medium of his own reflections. In Strange Interlude, O' Neill also tries to portray objectively the inner processes of the human psyche, Earlier he had used the device of masks in The Great God Brown to portray the innér conflicts of chmmattors and the problem of split personality. But in Strange Interlude, the tool is totally different.

Strange Interlude is the story of Nina Leeds, the daughter of a New England professor, whose lover Gordon Shaw, an aviation officer, is killed in war without consummating his love relationship with her. The incidents provides the base for a series of attachments, disillusionments and unfulfilled desires in the life of Nina

which in the end leaves her a totally spent woman. Nina is the central character and the instigator of the action and the story progresses on the action and reactions of Nina towards the men she comes in contact with. Much as O' Neill may deny it, the influence of Frued is clearly visible in the play in the theme. Nina's life after her fiance's death is seen from the psychoanalyst's point of viewaand O' Neill's employment of the stream-of-consciousness technique in order to bring out the psychic tension of his characters.

The tragedy is set in motion when Nina's fiance Gordon dies in war. The incident throws her into a state of shock. She begin s to hate her father for his morality, for it was he wo had objected to their developing relationship before marriage. In order to compensate for what she thinks was her cowardly treachery to Gordon, Nina becomes a nurse in a hospital for crippled soldiers. But after a year of working there she feels as dissatisfied and emotionally insecure as ever before. In a search for security, she marries Sam with the secret hope that a child might fill the void in her life. Sam is the familier O' Neill parody of the dense complacent business man, an eternal undergraduate who fashions a successful career but never bothers to understand life. The marriage is a disaster from the start and fate strikes a cruel blow when Nina realizes that she cannot have a child by Sam for fear of the streak of hereditary insanity in the family. Events take a very complicated turn when Nina in accordance with her mother-in-law's wish goes to Dr. Darrell who agrees to be the child's father.

Darrell is a typical product of the scientific age, taking science to be the modern God, the answer to all problems of life. In the beginning both show themselves to be very matter-of-fact and objective about the whole affair. But soon they are passionately in love. The child born of this union is named Gordon by the mother. Thus the infant's paternity acquires a kind of duplicity when we realize that " biologically he is the son of Darrell, spiritually the son of Gordon and morally the soneof Sam Evans"[1].

Nina never loved Sam and so she decides to sue for divorce and marry Darrell. First Darrell refuses the proposal but later when he makes up his mind to marry, it is Nina who refuses. She has come to realize in the end that she desires no single man. So she decides to hold all the three men in her trap— Sam her husband, Darrell her lover, and Marsden the father surrogate who has always been there behind the scene watching and waiting patiently. Gloating on her possession she says triumphantly—

> "My three men.... I feel their desires converge on me ..... to form one complete male desire which I absorbe ..... and am whole .... they dissolve in me, their life is my life.... I am pregnant with the three..... husband!.....lover..... father.... little Gordon!.... he is mine too!.... that makes it perfect!"[2]

But this state of affairs does not last long. One by one all her men leave her. In theeeve of her life it is only Charles Marsden who remains by her side and cares enough for her to ask her hand in marriage. He tells her... " so let's you and me forget the whole distressing episode, regard it as an interlude of trial and

1. Goyal, B.S. Op.cit p. 123
2. Nine Plays, p. 666.

preparation say, in which our souls have been scraped clean of impure flesh and made worthy to bleach in peace! [1]

Several points are to be taken special note in the play. First of all is the character of Nina which is seen and developed in the perspective of the relationship the men have with her. The men in her life can neither be described as types nor as fully developed individuals, or round and full human beings. The speech about her three men is the most self-evident example of her feelings towards each of them and suggest that each of these men are really partial aspects of a whole male personality. Nina's character grows and develops along the relationship she has with these men. Though the play aims at a tragic end, the heroine does not strike us as a tragic figure. Perhaps the reason may be that Nina is shown to make a number of choices in life, most of them of a questionable moral value yet never is she once subjected to moral judgement. Even when she wills her husband's death and attempts through an outrageous lie to break offer her son's engagement, the spectator is unable to criticize her actions except by divorcing himself entirely from the conditions under which the play operates. Nina's moral or amoral choices reveal her psychological obsessions, but do not help her to outgrow them. The only development in her is from youth to old age. At the end she is the same person she was at the outset and though what that character amounts to has been revealed in an acute way, it has not proved especially individuating. " Nina is a precursor of a long line of neurotic heroines in American theatre but compared with many of her daughters... she is strangely faceless."[2]

---

1. Ibid p. 681
2. Bogard, Travis Op.cit. p. 305.

The technique of interior monologue has been looked upon favourably by many critics like Richard Dana Skinner and Engel and Timo Tiusanen(who calls it " a meeting place of outer impetus and inner quality of character, this inner quality of character which is articulated in monogues reflects the true nature of man)[2]. These interior monologues are more frequent when the characters are tense and emotionally perturbed. At such times these interior monologues are long and complicated indicating the conscious or subconscious repression of feelings or emotion. Once the repressed feelings have been released through these monologues the characters resume their normal ordinary dialogue. The psychic tensions of the characters are reflected in the broken rhythms of " incomplete sentences following one another in disjointed sequences according to the principle of free association" and " the loose syntax employed is often admirably suited to th the presentation of the rapid succession of images that come and pass through a person's mind, one image or thought leading to another Yet there are critics who are avorse to the experiment. For instance, W.J. Andersen beliwves that at times this technique was a ridiculously awkward procedure managed mechanically by a change in voice so that the scene took on intermittently the jerky attitude of a self-starting wax works."[3]

Though Andersen's criticism is correct and justified as far as stage presentation goes and that in deed is our main concern

---

1. Tiusanen, Timo, O' Neill's Scenic Images, Princeton Univ. Press 1968, p. 215."
2. Y.M. Biese. " Aspects of Expression I: Eugene O' Neill's Strange Interlude and Linguistic Presentation of the Interior Monologue, cited in Tiusanen, p. 217.n
3. Miller, J.Y., Eugene O' Neill and American Critic, A Summary and Bibliographical Checklist, Hemden, Archon Books, 1962, p. 58.

it cannot be denied that the technique itself is intriguing. Apart from revealing psychic tension the monologues also give an ironic undertone to the play. These monologues, by revealing incongruities between hidden thought and spoken word provide devastating comic irony. Exposing the distortions of the syoconscious thoughts as they pass into conscious speech the interior monologues also help point up the contortions of the somewhat obsessed personalities. Charles Marsden, Darrell, Sam Evans are all types but types who resemble the creations of Sherwood Andersen. All of them are psychological caricatures, the first possessing an exaggerated Oedipus complex, the second an exaggerated scientific objectivity, the third an exaggerated bourgeo is complacency. But Nina Leeds though similarly obsessed, with her selfish desires is not out of Andersen's rather she is out of Strindberg. As a critic says she is patterned after the Strindbergian destroyer though much of the sharpness and sting is lessened by the veil of sympathy O' Neill throws over her.[1] The obsessions of these warped characters enable O' Neill to explore the themes of death, insanity and bourgeo is morality.

Further more the interiour monologues point up some of the same themes as the masks in The Great God Brown did. They show people not fully communicating with each other, hiding thoughts and feelings and more important, they exhibit characters alienated from themselves, unable to articulate their deepest desires, ideas and confront their guit and fears.

The treatment of the influence of the sybconscious behaviour

---

1. Bogard, Travis, Op.cit p. 305.

is noteworthy. The interior monologues picture the "id" as God, the embodiment of the living factors in our lives, the contemporary tragic necessity. It resembles a modern fate, characterized by capriciousness and irrationality as Marsden's sexual neurosis and Nina's obsessions with the dead lover make evident. As Wood Krutch observes---

" The play employs our newly won knowledge of the unconscious in such a manner as to make it cast over all events that uncertain flickering light which it sheds in the life around us"[1]. This aspect of the play suggests the modern vision with the Christian God dead the new deity either indifferent or hostile.

Dramatic irony drenches the work as a result of both the interior monologue and the hidden nature of many events. Sam is the butt of much irony. He lives his life unaware of his family's hereditary insanity never knowing that his mother has persuaded his wife to have a child by Darrel. Others are also victims of their irony. Ned and Nina speakin Act IV, coldly and scientifically about intercourse with each other , exhibiting a laughable incongruity between their love and their motivation. Dominating both is an unrecognised unconcealed passion that leads Nina to guilt and drives Darrell to a life of semi-exile and a ruined career. Young Gordon, unaware of who his real father is, hates Sam. Perhaps the most comprehensive display of tragic irony is the famous scene at the end of Act VI with Nina triumphantly dominating all three of her lovers and thinking --" My three men... I feel their desires converge in me Two of these lovers, Evans and Marsden do not know about the third [2]

---

1. Joseph Woodkrutch in Cargill et al. p. 186.
2. Nine Plays, Op. cit p. 616.

and Nina and Darrell do not suspect the unhappiness which awaits them in the future when they come to love, need and despise each other.

Yet inspite of all the theatrical and expository values of the technique of interior monologue, it is to be kept in mind that Strange Interlude was not exactly a successful experiment of O' Neill. Leave aside the importance of the theme which in itself is not of universal significane, even the staging of the play is technically problematical. At times one feels that O' Neill is devising a complicated technique for a theme which could well have been brought out and communicated in a simple manner. Since O' Neill's experiments were directed towards a search for meaning in life, the evolution of a new dimension of meaning or human situation. But this does not happen to be the case inStrange Interlude. O' Neill's discovery of the stream-of-consciousness technique for the purpose of drama is most creditable but he has not been able to realize the fullest artistic possibilities, and potentialities of this device or to make it subservient to some significant purpose. In Strange Interlude the technique becomes an end in itself rather than a means of psychological penetration and instrument of profound and universal insights into human situations. Here while he has evolved a new technique it does not indicate an extension of the philosophicalv vision or the discovery of a new dimension ofh human personality. In other words a subtle and elaborate techniques has been put to little use, and can only be admired for its own sake.

****

O' NEILL'S ORESTEIA - A FREUDIAN INTERPRETATION- MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA. (1931)

One of the widespread models in modern drama is to reinterpret classical themes and to show it in relevance to the modern times. The desire to project one's system of thought and morality against a classical background obsessed O' Neill too and this is exactly what he does in Mourning Becomes Electra to the Greek tragedy of the House of Atreus. As a critic points out, the Orestean trilogy is " a triumph of social conscience"[1]. The family of Atreus suffers and is constantly subjected to agonies because they had violated the tribal law. Ultimately peace and order is restored to the family and society by the intervention of the divine order. The tragedy and consequently the suffering brought upon the House of Atreus is a chain reaction of sin and retribution. Atreus commits a horrifying sin when in sheer enmity he slays his own brother Thyestes's children and feeds him on their flesh. A curse descends upon Atreus's family as a result of his act. Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, returns victorious from the Trojan War and brings with him a concubine, the prophetess Cassandra. But no sooner does he arrive, he is killed by his own wife, Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus, the son of Thyestes. The motivation behind this murder is rather complex Clytemnestra hated Agamemnon for sacrificing their young daughter

1. Raghavcharyalu, Op.cit p. 104.

Iphigenia to appease the gods and Aeigisthus hated him for the treatment that Agamemnon's father had meted out to Thyestes. And above all lay the fact that Chytemnestra and Aegisthus were involved in mutual adultery, and so the murder of Agamemnon was most desired and imperative. After many years of this event, Orestes, son of Agamemnon returns from exile, and he and his sister pursue revenge and murder their mother and her lover. This act of matricide enrages the Furies who seek his destruction. The Furies pursue Orestes wherever he goes and after extensive wanderings and prolonged agony Orests is finally cleansed of his sin by appearing before the tribunal of Athene's Aeropagus. The Furies are pacified and assigned a respectable place in Argos as the Erinyes. To The Greeks this was a perfect conclusion for the story because it conformed to their idea of justice and rationality and democracy.

Mourning Becomes Electra parallels this tragedy very closely, but here O' Neill has transformed the structure in modern psychological terms. Mourning Becomes Electra begins at the point where mother and daughter, Christine and Lavinia wait in the House of Mannors for Ezra to return from War. Lavinia is shown to have a certain affection for a young man, Peter, while Orin Mannon loves his sister Hazel. Then comes Captain Brant to the house and the play takes a dramatic turn when Lavinia, egged on by an old family servant traps Adam Brant into admitting that he is the son of one of the Mannons who had seduced a maid servant and driven out of the house by Lavinia's grandfather.

Lavinia's suspicion of her mother grows stronger and she follows her to New York where Christine has planned a rendezvous with Adam Brant. She writes to her father and brother all about this liaison. Actually it is revealed in the action of the play. Brant had come to wreak vengeance upon Ezra for the injustice done to his father, but accidentally fell in love with Christine who reciprocated it, and who hated her husband as fiercely as did Brant. The adultery of Christine and Brant parallels that of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, as also the grudge that Aegisthus bore against Agamemnon. Christine could not forgive Ezra for sending Orin, their young son, to War, whereas in the Oresteia, Clytemnestra hates Agamemnon for sacrificing their daughter Iphigenia. But beyond this apparent parallelism, the motivation of O' Neill's tragedy is psychologically more complex and subtle and intricate. From now on the play moves as Stark Young points out—" with the father's hatred of the son, who returns it, the son's adoration of the mother, the daughter's and the mother's antagonism, the daughter's and the father's devotion, to Christine's murder of her husband with the poison sent by Brant and substituted for the medicine prescribed against his heart trouble"[1]. This is the end of the first part of the trilogy. When Orin returns from War, Lavinia relates to him the entire liaison between Adam and her mother and convinces him that it was Christine who killed Ezra Mannon,

---

1. Stark Young in O' Neill: A collection of Critical Essays ed. Gassner p. 85.

Christine tries to defend herself in front of her son against Lavinia. Orin pursues Adam Brant and shoots him at the ship where he and Christine had taken refuge. In her sheer grief, Christine kills herself. Orin, who is shown to have an undeniable mother fixation, is tormented by the fact that he is the cause of his mother's anguish and death. Orin and Lavinia take a voyage to the Southern Isles to relieve themselves of their mental agonies when they return they are changed people. Lavinia has grown like her mother, Orin like his father. Orin's mother complex is now directed towards Lavinia and we find him making an incestuous proposal to Lavinia, and is repushed by her. He shoots himself. Lavinia while speaking romantically to her friend Peter, finds the name of Adam Brant over and again on her lips. She breaks away from Peter and goes into the house and orders the doors and windows nailed shut and decides to live there a life in death. She will live with the Mannon deads.

O' Neill has successfully established a parallel between his own study of the neurotic repressions within a New England. Patrician family— the Mannons and the mythical Pelops. The same tangled domestic relationship between Atreus and Thyestes is expressed in Mourning Becomes Electra in the first part, with the feud between Ezra and Adam Brant. The character parallels are self evident. Ezra Mannon is Agamemnon, Adam Brant is Aegisthus, Christine is Clytemnestra, Lavinia is Electra and Orin is Orestes. Adam Brant wants to wreak vengeance on Ezra and becomes the instrument of nemeses in the hands of

Nemesis. For O' Neill " life as a whole is changed very little and therefore the ancient myth of the Atrides express the permanent patterns of relationships and experiences. What he has achieved in his great masterpiece is not merely a successful adaptation of the ancient myth but the reiteration of the fate of man particularly when he is the product of curse. In other words, the successors, Orestes and Electra, Lavinia and Orin have to pay with their sufferings and possible deaths for the sins committed by their ancestors. Therefore the meaning behind the ancient Aeschylean tragedy was sin and expiation, and behind O' Neill's tragedy of New England life, it is an expression of passion and sin leading to expiation. In this way " The modernization of characters and motives is carried through to the end."[1]

In Mourning Becomes Electra there is another interesting feature added by O' Neill through his amateur interest in modern psychology, particularly ideas on obsessions and fixations. He had attempted to read into the ancient myth an advanced meaning more suited to the modern industrial world. He borrowed only the theme pattern of Aeschylus and he wanted to reinterpret it as he wrote to A.H. Quinn—

" In modern psychological terms with Fate and Furies working from within the individual soul".[2]

O' Neill in his play has done away with the divine or supernatural machinery, but focussed on the self destructive psychological drives of men. Lavinia is shown throughout the trilogy

---

1. B.H. Clark, Op.cit p. 120.
2. Quinn, A.H. A History of American Drama From Civil War to the Present Day, New York: F.S. Crofts & Co. 1945, p. 255

as a father-centred individual and by nature hostile to the mother, especially when Brant who she likes becomes her mother's lover. When Peter Niles proposes to her she tells him..

" I can't marry any one, Peter, I've got to stay home. Father needs me![1]

The psychological obsessions which hunt and haunt the Mannons are clearly exploited by Adam Brant for his private vengeance—

" Well I suppose that's the usual way of it. A daughter feels closer to her father and a son to his mother![2]

This is in reply to Lavinia's passionate declaration—" I love father better than any one in the world. There is nothing I would not do to protect him from hurt."[3]

Lavinia and Orin are thus children born out of discord, not the products of war conjugal love-. The new cause for repressive feelings in Orin and Lavinia is thus the psychological fixations. If Orin is changed into a matericide by the influence of Lavinia, Brant is furious against his father, a Mannon, while his mother was a commoner. The killing of Brant leads to the suicide of Christine, for both are hunted for their own sins.

O' Neill makes the two Mannon children Lavinia and Orin obsessed in their attitude. The cause for this obsession is to be found in the crimes of the family-

" I have tried to trace to its secret hiding place in the

---

1. Nine Plays, p. 636
2. Ibid, p. 704
3. Ibid, p. 704

But in Mourning Becomes Electra the story is given a psychological significance by making Lavinia the central figure and the one to bear the brunt of the curse upon the family.

In this plays, so far O' Neill had been experimenting with various literary and theatrical conventions as a means of finding a proper idiom to convey his vision of life. In this great trilogy, Mourning Becomes Electra he has been able to introduce conventions drawn from different ages- the Myth of the Orestein- as the basic underlining pattern; the choric character and the use of masks for the individual characters from the Greek theatre; the soliloquies though in prose from the Renaissance theatre; and the psychoanalytical readings in character; the stream of consciousness monologues and the flash back techniques of modern stage.

To elaborate on this we may fleetingly discuss the literar devices and the stage techniques involved in the play.

First of all, O' Neill makes use of the myth of the House of Atreus as an archetypal pattern to highlight the sufferings of the Mannons. The employment of a well established ancient plot also gave him the freedom of achieving an aesthetic distance he was unable to strike in his earlier plays. Again the play closely followed the Greek model in building up a similar one- Agamemnon, Choephorae and Eumenides coincide with Home Coming, Hunted and Haunted. O' Neill employs a combination of the flash

back of midern fiction and the soliloquy when Orin and Lavinia express their inner tensions through short prose soliloquies.

There is also an element of symbolism involved in the play to represent ethical values. The most significant symbol of course is the house of the Mannons which not only forms the backbone of the setting but also plays the role of a character, a visual participant in the action of the play, it is described as

" a large building of the Greek temple type that was invogue in the first half of the 19th century. A white wooden portico with tall white columns contrasts with the wall of the house proper which is of gray stone."[1]

Obviously the combination of the two types of structure suggest the thematic combination of the Greek and Puritan element. The house stands also as a visual symbol of the state of the Mannons. It is the palace of death shutting out life. The Mannons are both attracted and terrified by life, but they are inevitably drawn back to the house by its fatal fascination. Commenting on the symbolic significance of the house a critic observes— psychoanalysts may call it a symbol of the cadaver... or mother's womb. Above all it is an artistic symbol with multiple layers of meaning; it contains references to Mannon dead, to their repressed ways of living in that prison..."[2]

1. Nine Plays. Foreword to Mourning Becomes Electra p. 684.
2. Tiusanen Op. cit. p. 237.

Therefore it is an interesting adaptation of the ancient myth, with O' Neill's grafting of the modern psychological idea of obsessions on the old ethical idea of guilt and expiation within a cursed family. Thus O' Neill has used a three dimensional framework in Mourning Becomes Electra. Ideologically he has used the Greek myth. The background is that of New England puritan society and the motivation of the characters is from Freudian psychology.

While in many instances O' Neill's play has closely paralleled the ancient legend, there are certain marked reinterpretations and modifications also evident. The story follows the Greek myth upto the middle of the third division of the play and here the incest motive, Orin killing Adam and Christine killing herself, the death of Orin himself, and the transference of the whole situation and dramatic focus from the brother to the sister depart from Aeschylus. The division of the play into three parts is of course like the Aeschylean trilogy but the dividing line is much less distinct in Mourning Becomes Electra. As Stark Young points out-

... the final curtain of the first part, for example falls on Ezra Mannon's death as in Aeschylus it does on Agamemnon's but there is not the same effect of totality because of the stress put on Lavinia... in the Greek tragedy Electra is left more or less in the background".[2]

---

1. Stark Young, Op.cit. p. 84.

But to my opinion this comparison is not sound. A womb is a symbol of warmth and security, which is more forcefully symbolized by the Blessed Isles. The Isles where Adam, Lavinia, Orin Ezra and Christine would like to escape is symbolic of peace, freedom and innocence. Infact all that is denied in their lives is represented by the island.

The central tension of the play is provided by this contrast between the House of Mannons and the Blessed Isles which suggest the contrasting rhythms of Puritanism and Paganism, Hell and Heaven, hatred and love., guilt and innocence, ugliness and beauty, suppression and fulfilment."[1]

By the use of chorus and masks O' Neill produces a sense of aloofness or larger perspective to the problem that is developed on stage. The sufferings of Orin and Lavinia are just not personal, but a part of the impersonal logic of sin and suffering. The intensity of the tragic vision lies not in the presentation of physical and mental sufferings, but in relating the sufferings to the commission of a crime. Tragic suffering is not totally unmerited as Aristotle has stated long ago in The Poetics; it is the result of a sin committed, whether the sin be a cognizable offence or an act of omission.

In O' Neill's tragic trilogy the choric function is performed by Seth Beckwith— the old retainer of the Mannons. In the first part it is he who provides in formation concerning the background of the family in his own spicy dialect. He has b

1. Goyal, Op.cit p. 192.

been the witness of the complete chain of sin and sufferings of Mannons from Abe Mannon's time to the reincarceration of Lavinia. He grimbly understands the nature of Mannon suffering and that is why in the last tragic scene where Lavinia shuts herself upto live a lonely life in the family mansion, he faithfully carried out her last order.

" You go now and close the shutters and nail them tight and tell Hannah to throw out all the flowers"[1]

The mask outfit for the major character is a device which adds the quality of detachment and distance to their action and suffering. The masks make them out not as ordinary human beings in time and place but symbolic figures taken out of time. The major characters— Ezra, Christine, Brant, Orin and Lavinia with their removable masks look as though they are the figures printed, fitted intoan tragic framework of passion, sin and suffering. Christine Mannon's face is described as giving the impression,

" of being not living flesh, but a wonderfully life-like mask, in which only the deep- set eyes, of a dark violet blue are alive."[2]

In Lavinia's case too, there is the reference to-

" Life-like mask impression her face gives in repose"[3]

There is repetition of the same stage direction regarding Brant-

One is struck at a glance by the peculiar quality his face in repose has of being a life-like mask rather then

1. Nine Plays, p. 667 2. Ibid p. 691
3. Ibid p. 703.

living flesh"[1].

Even the face of Ezra Mannon and the ancestors bear the same mask like quality.

With the help of these elements O' Neill has built up a powerful trilogy of the damned, illustrating vividly the inner tensions which cause misery and ruin in well to do families. But the use of all these conventions made the tragic form rather diffuse. Inspite of the diffusiveness however, it is an undeniably dynamic and powerful tragedy. In the end it is Lavinia who is left to bear the curse of the Mannons. It is she who drove Orin to kill Brant, it is she who made Christine and Orin commit suicide again it is she who does not leave herself without punishment. She displays a heroic aspect of her character in facing this curse descending from the past. With a crashing but heroic self- recognition Lavinia takes the punishment on herself of allife in death for the Mannon crime of bringing about death in life. The complicated woe of humanity is resolved in the play not in terms of neurosis but by means of a responsible adult recognition of guilt and a self punishment which is also an index of the self understanding attained in all great tragedy. There is a tragic totality of vision in Lavinia's entering into her coffin like mansion, a poignant consummation of the ritual sacrifice of a Mannon to their family tradition. Her significant cry—" I am not asking God for forgiveness, " I forgive myself" brings the whole pressures of moral responsibility on the freewill of the individual which gives

1. Ibid, p. 703.

Lavinia a heroic stature and raises her to the level of the Greek tragic heroines— Antigone and Electra.

O' Neill's play unlike the Greek ends with a kind of dark vision which seems to envelop the House of Mannons. Besides him, many other modern dramatists have adopted the myth of the Oresteia as a vehicle for expressing their own experience of contemporary civilization. The purpose of O' Neill and T.S. Eliot and Jean Paul Sartre who adopted this myth as well was to give a new interpretation and meaning to the older myth and present some psychological and spiritual problems which pester the modern individual being. O' Neill adheres to the infra structure of the Greek legend rather closely, except for a few striking innovations that he makes in the reinterpretation of the myth. Jean Paul Sartre on the other hand adheres to the original framework without any change in his The Flies. He omits the first part of the triology, that is the death of Agamemnon and begins with the return of Orestes. The background of the play is the city of Argos and the incident dramatized is that of Orestes killing his mother and Aegisthus. The swarms of flies are the Furies, multiplying in number and inflating in size.

Sartre's conception of the collective guilt and collective conscience of being and meaninglessness are all involved in it. The city of Argos seems to be living under the shadow of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. The dramatist reproduces the exploitation of the Occupation by the Nazis. Argos is actually France. They were dominating unjustly and this has been transferred tothe common people. It is the sin of the ruler which has been passed on in a crafty manner to

the common people so that they live a life of death. The festival of the dead releases the soul of the dead people and they come and live with their murderer or with those who cause their death. Indirectly Sartre is relating that the rulers, by creating not only an economic, po political but also psychological subjugation of the common man, are living a life of great crime. Freedom of creating their own values and living their own lives has been taken away from them so that they are living a life of death. The people of Argos have lived a life of freedom and now living a life of their ruler's guilt are haunted by the shadow of the flies. In modern times the furies could be taken as an externalization of the inner guilt and conflict. The flies represent the slavish ill mentality of the Argosians Jupiter and Apollo are hand in glove with the rulers of the country. According to Sartre man is born free but it is a meaningless freedom. Man, through his choice action and desires, seeks to give a direction and meaning to his life. In this atmosphere only Electra is not taken in with the moral subjugation. She believes in a religion of beauty and joy. Her voice is suppressed.

Sartre has used it to make a political and moral comment on the times, and like O' Neill the aesthic distance that is created by the imposition of the Greek infrastructure gives a greater significante to the stories.

T.S. Eliot's The Family Reunion is a play of double pattern, the outer drama consisting of a set of modern characters grouped round a widowed lady, Amy, who, on her birthday, is waiting for the return of her eldest son, Harry after an absence of eight years. She wishes him

to marry Mary, a girl of her choice, and tosettle at home as the head of the family in the ancestral mansion significantly known as Wishwood. The inner drama, which centres round Harry, Lord Monchchenscy, flanked by his aunt Agatha and his childhood playmate and sweetheart, Mary is a story of sin and expiation based on the Aeschylean tragedy of the pursuit of Orestes, the matricide by the Furies who are, in the end transformed into Eumenides, " the good angels" or"the kindly ones".

Eliot was writing at a time when the anthropologists were busy discovering and emphasizing the ritualistic origin of the Greek drama. And The Family Reunion has many traces of the old ritual of the ' scapegoat' loaded with the sin of community, the banishment of which symbolized purgation or atonement. Harry thus is the scapegoat for the sin of the family, and the ' runes' sung by Mary and Agatha as part of the ritual of purgation or exorcism have their justification, whatever the critics of the play may say about their artistic propriety. The fundamental theme of old myth and ritual is death and rebirth, a theme which is easily traceable in the play. Thus wishwood the doomed pouse has become dead and its deadness is suggested by the pointed reference to its coldness, and Amy who has identified herself with the house has been leading a kind of death in life, from which she is released by her actual death in the end. Harry himself is half-dead and walks about pursuid by ghosts. His expiation marks at once the renewal of his tainted self, the purgation of his family and the transformation of the "grim spectres "into" bright angels.

Considered this way, O' Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra is undoubtedly a successful effort. As he expressed in a letter to A.H. Quinn, his aim in writing was —

" to develop a tragic expression in terms of transfigured modern values and symbols in the theatre which may be some degree bring home to members of a modern audience their ennobling identity with the tragic figure of the stage"[1]

O'b Neill brought the ancient pattern of the tragic experience resulting from the vicious circle of sin and suffering, in to the American context. The play is also interesting because through it O' Neill has expressed these emotional stresses completely as Crosswell Bowen remarks-

" Perhaps no other American artist has ever lived the emotional content of his material so directly or expressed with such awesome truthfulness as did this man who experienced and created the haunted World of Eugene O' Neill"[2]

.....

1. A.H. Quinn, " A History of American Drama" p. 199.
2. Crosswell Bowen, " Curse of the Misbegotten" p. 211

RESUME

While attempting an appraisal of O' Neill as a dramatist, one must initially concede the point that he was an extra-ordinary creative force, such as before had not emerged on the American dramatic scene, and perhaps he has not been surpassed in the significance and magnitude of his achievement to date. In granting him distinction critics are unanimously agreed. As John Gassner says— " He dignified the craft of playwriting in America".

In this dissertation however, I have dealth with only one exclusive portion of the entire bulk of O' Neill's dramatic works— the experimental plays, and that too I have confined myself to only seven of them. My assessment must therefore come from these few plays, and through it I have tried to come to grips with an artist whose experimentation is so varied.

One thing about his experimentation is self evident — by it and through it he tried to give range and significance to American drama which had hitherto been toeing the line of the Well Made Play on the one hand, and melodrama, vandeville and extravaganza on the other. This endeavour itself places him on the same level as the European theatrical pioneers. His commitment to life and art, his search for spiritual values combined with a desire to express life in the most adequate terms led him to experiment restlessly and constantly. This is the reason why O' Neill is experimental plays tryto penetrate almost every aspect of life and they make use of almost all experimental techniques and draw upon significant movements in European theatre and drama.

The themes of O' Neill's plays are varied, but one constant preoccupation of his is the condition of man in this modern scientific world, the state of the human psyche in this human destiny. O' Neill does not take anything for granted, nor is he interested in sensational stories and situations but he tries to come to grips with the problems of the modern individual and the multifaceted dimensions of the human personality.

His plays also provide a clue as to what a painstaking and fastidious artist he was. Play after play reveals O' Neill's disinterest in literalness and dissatisfaction with naturalism and attempts to enrich dramatic form by employing the most advanced techniques such as Expressionism, Surrealism, Symbolism and the Stream of Consciousness device. When read consecutively and considered in relation to his vast and challenging objectivity, his dramas seem to fall into a significant pattern. Beyond their individual qualities they seem to describe the successive stages of his spiritual quest.

However it is possible to divide his experimental plays into two marked categories--- these which are purely experimental in style and the theme is of a general nature; plays like The Hairy Ape and The Strange Interlude. The other category has plays where the theme overpowers the technique. Thus technically we find a great diversity in O' Neill's plays. But thematically again we may divide into two broad areas. There are plays which are concerned with making an acute analysis of the human psyche and complex intra-personal relationships-- for example Desire Under the Elms, and Mourning Becomes Electra. Secondly there are plays with philosophical problems pertaining to the nature of man, the image

and human destiny. This includes plays like The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape and Lazarus Laughed. Yet there are some plays where these two qualities overlap— for instance, The Great God Brown and Strange Interlude. By and large, plays which are metaphysical and which attempt to creat an image of man and human destiny are more experimental in nature during in their assumption and bold in their technique. Those concerned with acute case studies of highly individualistic characters pay more attention to specific psychological experiences and intra-personal experiences. What binds these two categories is O' Neill's persistent quest for clarity, meaning, significance and value in existence., What connects them is also his tragic sense of life. Whether he is writing a drama of acute psychological penetration or one with a universal theme, his sense of life is tragic. O' Neill believes that man is destroyed not only by the vast external and incomprehensible forces of human destiny but also by the damn and destructive forces of his own subconscious. However, though he is a dramatist with a tragic bent of mind, his vision lacks the profundity which say the Greeks or Shakespeare have.

Although there is a lot of quest, soul searching and the desire to find an appropriate medium to express his thoughts in O' Neill's plays, and he has dealt with themes of great magnitude and import, yet he appears to profound no consistent philosophy. More than often he seems to be straining this dramatic structure too much and the plays seem to carry the burden of

thought more than is due. O' Neill depends heavily on ideas and theories which inhibit his penetration into the situation and characters. Most of his characters seem to be created to fit into certain Freudian psychological concepts.

The phase chosen for study is a crucial one, a significant one, notwithstanding the various limitations. It gains importance by virtue of its highly experimental nature. Another factor worth noting about this specific period is that the earlier one act plays are a preliminary to it, while the later ones accrue from it. It is a fairly mature and highly experimental phase and the later plays seem to be drawing upon the insights and experiments of the middle period.

. . . . . .

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

1. The Plays of Eugene O' Neill, New York: Random House 3 Vols., 1951.
2. Nine Plays. Introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch. New York: Liveright, 1932. A One-volume compilation consisting of The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, All God's Chillun Got Wings, Desire Under the Elms, Marco Millions, The Great God Brown, Lazarus Laughed, Strange Interlude, Morning Becomes Electra. Issued as a Modern Library volume in 1932 and reprinted in 1941 and 1954.

Secondary Sources:

1. Alexander, Doris M., " Captain Brant and Captain Brassbound The Origin of an O' Neill Character", Modern Language, 74 (April 1959).

   ———————— " Eugene O' Neill as Social Critic", American Quarterly, 8 (Winter 1954).

   ———————— " Lazarus Laughed and Buddha", Tulane Drama Review, XI, 4 (Summer 1967).

   ————————, " Psychological Fate in Mourning Becomes Electra", PMLA, 68(1953).

   ————————, " The Tempering of Eugene O' Neill", New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.
2. Barret, William, Irrational Man, A study in Existential Philosophy, London: Heinemann, 1964.

3. Baum, Bernard, " The Tempest and The Hairy Ape", Modern Language Quarterly, XIV, 3 (Sept. 1953).

4. Benchley, Robbert C.,"Mourning Becomes Electra," New Yorker, 7(Nov. 1931).

5. Bentley, Eric, The Theatre of the Modern Stage, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968.

6. Biese, Y.M., Aspect of Expression I: Eugene O' Neill's Strange Interlude and the Linguistic Presentation of the Interior Monologue, Helsinki: Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, B, 118, 3, 1963.

7. Bogard, Travis and Willian I. Oliver, eds., Modern Drama, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

8. Bogard, Travis, Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O' Neill, New York, Oxford University Press, 1972.

9. Boulton, Agnes, Part of a Long Story, New York: Doubleday, 1958

10. Bowen, Crosswell(With the assistance of Shane O' Neill), The Curse of the Misbegotten: A Tale of the House of O' Neill, New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 1959.

11. Broussard, Louis, American Drama: Contemporary Allegory from Eugene O' Neill to Tennesse Williams, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962.

12. Brustein, Robert, The Theatre of Revolt, London: Methuen & Co., 1968.

13. Cargill, Oscar, et al., eds., O' Neill and His Plays, London: Beter Owen, 1964.

14. Carpenter, Frederic I., Eugene O' Neill, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964.

15. Clark, Barret H., Eugene O' Neill(1926)Man and His Plays, rev. ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1947.

16. Clark, Marden J., " The Tragic Effect in the Hairy Ape" Modern Drama, X, 4(Feb. 1968).

17.Cole, Toby, ed., Playwrights on Playwriting, New York: Hill and Wang, 1960.

18. Day, Cyrus, " Amor Fati: O' Neill's Lazarus as Superman and Saviour", Modern Drama, III, 3 (Dec. 1960).

19. Ellis-Fermor, UNA, The Frontiers of Drama, London: Methuen & Co., 1949.

20. Engel, Edwin A., The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O' Neill, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.

21. Esslin, Martin, The Theatre of the Absurd, rev. ed., Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968.

22. Falk, Doris V., Eugene O' Neill and the Tragic Tension: An Interpretive study of the Plays, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1958.

23. Fergusson, Francis, " Eugene O' Neill," Hound and Horn,3 (Jan- March 1930).

24. Fraser, G.S., The Modern Writer and His World, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966.

25. Gaskell, Ronald, Drama and Reality: The European Theatre since Ibsen, London: Roultedge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

26. Gassner, John, Eugene O' Neill, Minneapolis: University Minnisota Press, 1965.

. . ————————, ed., O' Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

27. Gelb, Arthur and Barbara, " O' Neill ", London: Jonathan Cape, 1962.

28. Gould, Jean, " Modern American Playwright", New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1966.

29. Hinden, Michael, " The Birth of Tragedy and The Great God Brown", Modern Drama, XVI, 2(Sept. 1973).

30. Kitto, H.D.F., " Form and Meaning in Drama", London: Methuen and Co., 1960.

31. Krutch, Joseph Wood, " The American Drama Since 1918", rev. ed. New York: Braziller, 1957.

. ———————, " Introduction", Nine Plays by Eugene O' Neill, New York: Modern Library, 1954.

32. Lamm, Martin, Modern Drama, New York: Philosophical Library, 1953.

33. Langer, Lawrence,"The Play& the Thing," Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960.

34. Lawson, John Howard, " Theory and Technique of Playwriting, New York: Hill and Wang, 1960.

35. Leech, Clifford, " Eugene O' Neill", Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963.

36. Macgowan, Kenneth, " The Theatre of Tomorrow", New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921.

37. May, Rollo, " Man's Search for Himself", London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953.

38. Mickle, Alan D., " Six Plays of Eugene O' Neill", New York: Horace Liveright, 1929.

39. Miller, Jordan Y., " Eugene O' Neill and the American Critic, A Summary and Bibliographical Checklist", Hamden: Archon Books, 1962.

40. Nicoll, Allardyce, " World Drama" London: George G. Harrap and Co, 1964.

41. Peacock, Ronald,"The Art of Drama", New York: Macmillan, 1957.

———————, " The Poet in the Theatre", London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1961.

42. Quinn, Arthur Hobson,"History of American Drama from Civil War to the Present Day,"New York: F.S. Crofts and Co., 1945.

43. Raghavacharyulu, D.V.K.,"Eugene O' Neill": A Study", Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1965.

44. Raleigh, John Henry," The Plays of Eugene O' Neill," Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965

45. Shipley, Joseph T., " The Art of Eugene O' Neill", Seattle: University of Washington Chapbooks, 1928

46. Sievers, W. David, " Freud on Broadway, New York: Hermitage House, 1955.

47. Skinner, Richard Dana, " Eugene O' Neill": A Poet's Quest, New York: Russel and Russel, 1964.

48. Steinberg, M.W., " Aspects of Modern Drama", New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.

49. Tiusanen, Timo, " O' Neill's Scenic Images, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968.

50. Trilling, Lionel, " Eugene O' Neill", New Republic, 88 (Sep. 23, 1936).

———————, " Introduction" to The Emperor Jones, Anna Christie,"The Hairy Ape", New York: Modern Library, 1937.

51. Whitman, Robert F., O' Neill's Search for a ' Language of the Theatre'", " The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLVI, 2 (April 1960)

52. Williams, Raymond,"Drama from Ibsen to Eliot", Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964.

53. Winther, Sophus Keith, " Desire Under the Elms: A Modern Tragedy", Modern Drama, III, 3(Dec. 1960)

———————————, Eugene O' Neill: " A Critical Study, New York: Russel and Russel, 1961.